



Mid-term
Evaluation of the
**Civil Society Facility for the
Western Balkans and Turkey**
Appendices

1 DECEMBER 2017

Prepared by:



EVALUATION
REPORT

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The evaluation team would like to thank representatives of DG NEAR, D5, EU Delegations in each country and other EU services, CSO members and government representatives from each country interviewed as part of the evaluation process. The evaluation team was accorded a warm welcome, enthusiasm and responsiveness from each of these groups, who contributed strong inputs/ feedback to the evaluation which assisted in the evaluation's analysis and outcomes.

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Mid-term Evaluation of the Civil Society Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey

Appendices

1 December 2017

European Commission, DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (NEAR)
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FWC BENEFICIARIES 2013 — LOT 7: GOVERNANCE AND HOME AFFAIRS EuropeAid/132633/C/SER/multi

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SPECIFIC TERMS OF REFERENCE

FWC BENEFICIARIES 2013 - LOT 7: Governance and Home Affairs

Mid-term Evaluation of the Civil Society Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Beneficiaries

Albania, Croatia¹, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey

1.2 Contracting Authority

European Commission, DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (NEAR), Unit D5.

1.3 General Information

A strong civil society is a crucial component of any democratic system. Therefore, the EU focuses its policies on Civil Society Organisations' (CSOs) engagement to build stronger democratic processes, accountability system and to achieve better development outcomes. The 2012 communication "The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with civil society in external relations"² put forward three priorities for EU support: (1) increasing CSOs' capacities to perform their roles as independent development actors, (2) promotion of conducive environments for CSOs and (3) promotion of structured participation of CSOs in domestic policies, in EU programming cycles and internationally. These priorities are also part of the political criteria for accession as outlined in the 2015 Enlargement Strategy and Country Reports.

EU assistance for civil society development and dialogue in the Western Balkans and Turkey has been provided mainly through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA). Under IPA the European Union established in 2008 the Civil Society Facility (CSF) aiming at supporting the development of an active civil society capable to participate in the public debate on democracy, human rights, social inclusion and the rule of law, as well as to influence policy and decision making processes.

The Civil Society Facility was established based on a clear strategy to support:

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

¹ Until 2013.

² Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: "The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with civil society in external relations" 2012.

1. Local capacity building, which would reach grass-root organisations with seed funding and focussing on capacity rather than project/service implementation
2. Capacity building for governments and the creation of spaces for cooperation between CS and governments.
3. Knowledge of EU institutions and counterparts through visiting groups (People to People – P2P)
4. Partnership actions and networks between Civil Society Organisations in all countries and EU partners.

The assistance provided through IPA is complemented by other policy and financial instrument such as the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR); Cross-border Cooperation and IPA Bilateral programmes supporting civil society in Turkey and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2011-2013).

After a wide consultation process, in 2013 the Commission endorsed a set of objectives and results to provide measurable and useful policy objectives in the areas of enabling environment for civil society and capacity building of CSOs. These objectives were compiled in the *DG ELARG Guidelines for EU support to Civil Society in enlargement countries 2014-2020*³ in order to develop a monitoring and evaluation system based on clear benchmarks and indicators grouped in: legal and financial environment; dialogue with institutions, and; capacities of CSOs. The guidelines serve as a results-oriented framework setting clear targets per country until 2020. The monitoring of the guidelines has taken place twice (latest in April 2016) with participation of the EU, CSOs and national government representatives. The output of the monitoring exercise provides valuable inputs for the annual country reports and future programming of IPA support.

A number of 633 organisations in the region and 136 EU-based organisations have participated in more than 300 projects financed by the CSF between 2011 and 2016 improving the environment in which civil society operates and increasing their capacities and effectiveness. All the supported initiatives covered a wide range of sectors including: (i) good governance and local democracy, (ii) technical assistance and capacity building, (iii) public administration reform and public financial management, (iv) rule of law and fight against corruption, (v) reconciliation and cultural dialogue, (vi) environment, climate action, energy and agriculture, (vii) social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and fight against poverty, (viii) youth, and (ix) media in numerous and diverse initiatives that substantially benefited citizens, CSOs and state institutions.

In order to achieve its goal of building a vibrant civil society in the region, the CSF shapes its action in several components established by the CSF programmes and covers both the national and the regional geographical dimension.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

2.1. Beneficiaries and Stakeholders

³ See Annex I for further reference

The beneficiaries of this thematic evaluation will be the European Commission and the beneficiaries of IPA assistance covered by it. The stakeholders for this evaluation include:

National stakeholders include (non-exhaustive list):

- National IPA Coordinators (NIPAC);
- Other relevant bodies directly or indirectly involved in the programming and implementation of EU assistance and relevant reforms;
- Government Offices in charge for Cooperation with CSOs
- Councils for the Civil Society Development (CCSD);

EC stakeholders (non-exhaustive list):

- DG NEAR Directorate D; Unit A.3: Thematic support, monitoring and Evaluation; Unit A.5: Turkey; CoTE on Civil Society support.
- EU Delegations in beneficiary countries.

Other stakeholders (non-exhaustive list):

- Civil Society Organisations⁴, networks, platforms, etc
- Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organisations (TACSO) and national Resource Centres for civil society development
- The Local Advisory Groups (LAGs) established by TACSO in each of the Beneficiaries

2.2. Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation has to be carried out against the objectives of the Instruments for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) I and II. This includes the Multi-Country Indicative Strategy paper (MCSP) and the Civil Society Facility (and Media) Programmes (2011-2012/2013/2014-2015/2016-17⁵) – including all the Action documents annexed to the programmes. The DG ELARG Guidelines for EU support to civil society, already mentioned, should also be considered as relevant strategic document translating policy priorities into concrete objectives and targets of the assistance.

The evaluators will also analyse the latest version of the TACSO Needs Assessment Reports for each country and the TACSO Baseline and Monitoring reports of the DG ELARG Guidelines for EU support to civil society.

Finally, it is recommended to include in the analysis the results of the previous Evaluations of EU's support to Civil Society in the Western Balkans and Turkey, and to coordinate the evaluation with other ongoing assessments in this field (for further details see 2.5).

The references of the programmes to be covered, previous evaluations and TACSO documents are provided in Annex I.

⁴ The EU considers CSOs to include all non-state, not-for-profit structures, non-partisan and non-violent, through which people organise to pursue shared objectives and ideals, whether political, cultural, social or economic. Operating from the local to the national, regional and international levels, they comprise urban and rural, formal and informal organisations.

⁵ See Annex I for the references of the CSF programmes.

The evaluation will concern all the projects implemented and ongoing financed by the programmes mentioned above and will include all the CSF components:

- Regional and national grants to CSOs
- Technical Assistance to CSOs and Governments
- People-2-People programme
- Actions to strengthen Media and Freedom of Expression

2.3. Global objective

This is a mid-term evaluation of EU's support to civil society organisations in the Western Balkans (namely in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Croatia; former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Kosovo*, Montenegro and Serbia) and Turkey over the period 2011-2016 in the context of the EU enlargement policy.

The primary objective of the evaluation is to assess the performance of financial assistance in achieving its objectives, and namely, its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, EU added value, coherence, complementarity and consistency as well as impact and sustainability.

The evaluation will also provide findings and recommendations to assist the Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations of the European Commission (DG NEAR) in the programming and implementation of EU pre-accession assistance to support civil society in candidate and potential candidate countries with a view of improving the instruments available.

2.4. Specific objective(s)

The specific objectives of this evaluation are:

- 1) To assess the performance of the assistance both at regional and national level, particularly as regards its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, EU added value, coherence, complementarity and consistency, impact and sustainability. The assessment of each evaluation criteria should measure achievements against indicators set up in strategic and programming documents.
- 2) To provide an assessment of the intervention logic of EU assistance to support civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey in light of the CSOs needs in the region and the priorities set by DG NEAR in its policy and strategy documents. The evaluators will assess to which extent programming documents are based on a balanced and comprehensive planning of the support to civil society.

2.5. Requested services, evaluation questions, methodology and quality control

2.5.1. Requested Services

- 1) Regarding the specific objective 1, the evaluation will **assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, EU added value, coherence, complementarity and consistency, impact and**

sustainability of the financial assistance provided by the Civil Society Facility and Media programmes in the Western Balkans and Turkey between 2011 and 2016.

In this regard the evaluators will:

- a) Develop a sound methodology for the required task and sector (civil society development) including: an overall design of the evaluation; revision of the evaluation questions and proposed judgement criteria; identification of data and information to be collected; methods to analyse the data; consultation strategy, etc.
- b) Review all the projects supported by the CSF and Media at regional and national level in the reference period on the basis of the database that will be provided by DG NEAR. If needed the contractor will update and further elaborate the database during the data gathering. The contractor will elaborate statistics and analysis and will propose possible improvements of the same database (e.g. classification criteria, recommendations for updating on a rolling basis by DG NEAR and EUDs; user friendly interface with CRIS/ post-CRIS IT environment, etc.).
- c) Elaborate and submit a questionnaire to all the beneficiaries/projects supported by the CSF in the period 2011-16 and interview/ meet a representative sample of them. The sample will be defined according to a mix of different CSF components, regional/ national initiatives, geographical coverage of different countries, sectorial distribution, etc. The sample will be discussed and approved by the Contracting authority during the inception phase.
- d) Analyse the different implementing instruments of the CSF. The analysis will assess the effectiveness, efficiency and synergies between instruments and will propose possible improvements. This will include as a minimum:
 - Short, medium and long-term action grants
 - Framework Partnership Agreements
 - operating grants
 - financial contribution to third parties (re-granting schemes)
 - Technical Assistance
 - Regional and national events and study visits (People-2-People programme_

2) Regarding specific objective 2, the evaluation will assess the intervention logic of the Multi Country Indicative Strategy Paper and IPA CSF programmes 2011-16 including the Action documents. The evaluators will assess to which extent the programming documents are based on current EU priorities and adequate assessment of needs and provide realistic and clear objectives, SMART indicators, sequencing of assistance, donors coordination, etc.

The evaluators will provide relevant findings, conclusions and lessons learned. This will include making recommendations and concrete proposals on definition of objectives and related SMART indicators to facilitate the measurement of performance and design of the future support to civil society.

3) Based on relevant findings, conclusions and lessons learned as per 1) and 2) above the evaluators will produce operational recommendations aiming to improve the performance of the financial assistance and the programming of future assistance to Civil Society (i.e. next CSF programme 2018-20) as well as corrective measures, where applicable, to improve the implementation and monitoring of ongoing actions (i.e. possible amendments to CSF Programme 2017).

4) Throughout all the assignment the contractor will ensure:

- A participatory approach and continuous consultation with the main beneficiaries and stakeholders listed in 2.1 with a particular attention to CSOs and Government Offices for civil society support in the different countries. Provisions for de-briefing seminars should be planned both in Brussels and all the concerned countries. ;
- the consistency and coordination of the CSF mid-term evaluation with other evaluations concerning support to civil society as well as with ROM exercises planned or on-going in the same period in the geographical areas under DG NEAR responsibility⁶.

2.5.2. Evaluation questions

Possible evaluation questions to be further elaborated in the inception phase are (the list is not exhaustive):

RELEVANCE

Programming level

- To what extent are these objectives relevant as regards the Copenhagen political criteria for accession and current EU priorities?
- To what extent planning and programming provide adequate assessment of beneficiary needs (both financial and time)? Have CSOs been involved as stakeholders in the assessment of needs, definition of strategies and other relevant aspects of the intervention logic?
- To what extent do objectives at different level (strategic, MIPDs and programmes) clear, measurable and realistic?
- To what extent do programming and monitoring mechanisms include SMART (Specific, Measurable, Available, Relevant and Time-bound) indicators to measure progress towards achievement of objectives?
- To what extent does programming take adequate and relevant account of assistance provided and reforms promoted by key donors where applicable?
- Which are the main gaps/weaknesses of the current programming framework?

Project level

⁶ Relevant evaluations in the pipeline or ongoing in 2016 (enlargement and neighbourhood regions) are:

- IPA II Mid-term review
- Support to Civil Society in the Neighbourhood South
- EUD Turkey - Evaluation on the impact of Sivil Düşün EU programme I and beginning of II. Framework contract to be launched beginning next year.
- EUD Tunisie – Programme d'appui à la société civile
- EUD BiH Potential areas/sectors for self-evaluation: Evaluation/assessment on IPA assistance in infrastructure projects in Environment/Justice/ Anti-Corruption/Civil society (tbc)

- To what extent has the allocation and use of financial assistance to civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey been consistent with the objectives of Commission strategy for civil society support?
- How well the financial assistance respond to the specific needs of the countries in the targeted sectors? Does the CSF remain relevant to the context?
- To what extent financial assistance has/is effectively contributing to achieving the strategic objectives/priorities, including the development of Western Balkan and Turkish CSOs and building their capacities with particular with regard to their role within the enlargement strategy?
- To what extent do the projects supported enforce the fulfilment of the visibility strategy set by the European Commission?

EFFECTIVENESS and EFFICIENCY

- Is the assistance balanced in the sense of coverage of the type, size and profile of organizations supported?
- To what extent is assistance balanced in terms of instruments mix (Technical assistance, micro and macro grant schemes, action vs. operating grants, P2Ps,)?
- To what extent are the different implementations systems (direct and indirect) affecting the support to civil society?
- How has the assistance strengthened the external and internal monitoring of EU support and capacities to civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey?
- To what extend financial assistance reached the grass-root, community based organizations?
- Has the programme introduced some actions aiming to diversify thematic grants schemes and to balance the support to CSOs? e.g. the introduction of flexible contractual arrangements; the ease of the management funds according to real needs; simplified application procedures; minimum co-financing requirements; usage of local languages, etc.
- To what extend is the assistance flexible enough to respond to changing needs?

IMPACT and SUSTAINABILITY

- What have been the impacts so far? To what extent are these impacts sustainable and what further improvements are needed?
- How the regional networks advocate for policy reforms in the Western Balkans and Turkey? How can their impact being improved?
- Which are the prospects for impact and sustainability of on-going IPA assistance? Are there any elements which are/could hamper the impact and/or sustainability of assistance?

ADDED VALUE

- To what extent do the CSF programmes add value compared to interventions by Members States or other donors in the field of support to civil society?

COHERENCE, COORDINATION AND CONSISTENCY

- To what extent are the different national and regional actions of the CSF programmes coherent/ complementing/overlapping?
- To what extent are the CSF programmes and assistance aligned and consistent with other EU instruments to support civil society (EIDHR, CBC, IPA bilateral programmes, etc.)? To what extent do programming and assistance take into consideration and interconnect with already existing national authorities' policies and strategies on support to civil society?
- To what extent are the CSF programmes and assistance complement/overlap with interventions of other donors?

Lessons learnt and recommendation regarding programming

- How can programming of assistance be enhanced to more efficiently and effectively reach strategic objectives?
- How can programming be enhanced to improve the impact and sustainability of financial assistance?
- How can programming be improved so that to make the link between the needs and priorities of the civil society sector, enlargement objectives and project activities?
- How can the programming process be improved to ensure the active involvement of civil society and that civil society needs feed into enlargement objectives and EU Financial assistance priorities?

Lessons learnt and recommendation regarding financial assistance

- Are there any potential actions which would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of ongoing assistance, including actions on the administrative and organisational setting?
- Are there any actions which would improve prospects for impact and sustainability of ongoing assistance?
- How can EU assistance better reach smaller grass-root organisations, including those in remote and isolated areas?
- How can EU assistance promote the interaction between civil society and government/public authorities at local (within a country) level?
- Is there room for recommending simplifications in the procedures used by the EU in supporting CSOs?

2.5.3. Methodology

The contractor may find useful methodological guidance on the DG NEAR and DEVCO website of the Evaluation Unit to be found here:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/evaluation/methodology/index_en.htm

The evaluation team should establish baselines against which change/progress will be measured. The policy and strategic frameworks should be included when establishing these baselines.

The evaluation should use both qualitative and quantitative methods to assess the impact of the CSF in the Western Balkans and Turkey 2011-16. In general the evaluation should follow the steps described below:

1) Desk review

This initial step will include as a minimum the following activities:

- Collection and analysis of relevant information
- Completion of the evaluation framework and methodology
- Drafting and submitting of the inception report, which:
 - summarises the objectives, scope and expected outputs of the evaluation
 - provides the final evaluation questions
 - describes the methodological approach, including the judgement criteria to be used and sources of information as well as measures to ensure participation and consultation of relevant stakeholders
 - Presents a work plan for the field and reporting phases.

A meeting in Brussels will take place at the beginning of the desk phase. The draft inception report will be sent to key stakeholders for comments before final endorsement by DG NEAR Unit D5 (Western Balkans Regional cooperation and programmes).

2) Field work

The field work will include as a minimum the following activities:

- Personal interviews, focus groups, meetings in Brussels and in the beneficiary countries
- Analysis of relevant information
- Phone interviews, e-mail questionnaires and other tools may complement personal interview and analysis of information
- Meetings in Brussels to discuss the inception report and the preliminary findings
- Debriefing meetings in all the beneficiary countries and in Brussels (after the submission of the final report)

N.B.: The evaluators should dedicate sufficient time of their assignment in the beneficiary countries in order to guarantee a proper level of participation and involvement in the evaluation of the relevant stakeholders.

3) Synthesis Phase

This phase is mainly devoted to the preparation of the evaluation report based on the work done during the desk and field phases and taking into consideration the outcomes of the briefing meetings.

The evaluator will make sure that his/her assessment is objective, balanced and substantiated. The evaluator will present findings, conclusions and recommendations following a logical cause-effect linkage. When formulating findings and conclusions, the evaluator should describe the facts assessed, the judgement criteria applied and how this led to findings and conclusions. The final judgment criteria will be fine-tuned and agreed during the inception phase.

Recommendations should address the weaknesses identified and reported. Recommendations should be operational and realistic in the sense of providing clear, feasible and relevant input for decision making. They should not be general but should address the specific weaknesses identified, clearly indicating the measures to be undertaken. Recommendations for action will be addressed to the Commission. However, where appropriate, the evaluator should specify the role of any actor other than the Commission, including beneficiary institutions, in implementing the recommendations.

2.5.4. Sources of information

Please refer to Annex I - Key Documents for Consultation and Review

2.6. Required outputs

The outputs of the evaluation are:

1) Inception Report

The Inception report will present the full methodological approach and set out a detailed planning of the evaluation, including the work plan. It will set the objective and scope of the evaluation and provide the final evaluation questions including the judgement criteria to be used and sources of information. The inception report should be submitted within 4 weeks after the start of the assignment via email and discussed with the Contracting Authority in a meeting in Brussels.

2) Final Evaluation Report

The final evaluation report should meet all the tasks covered by these terms of reference. The report should specifically answer the evaluation questions listed in section 2.5.2 as modified during the inception phase.

The evaluation report should include:

- i. An assessment of the performance/expected performance – both at regional and country level – as per specific objective 1 including relevant lessons learned and recommendations.
- ii. An assessment of the intervention logic and programming documents as per specific objective 2 including relevant lessons learned and recommendations at both overall strategic and individual country programme level (not project level)
- iii. Operational recommendations aiming to improve the performance of the financial assistance and the programming of future assistance to Civil Society as well as corrective measures, where applicable, to improve the implementation and monitoring of ongoing actions.

The final report takes into account the feedbacks of the European Commission, insofar as they do not interfere with the independence of the evaluator in respect to his opinions. It should be submitted within 2 weeks after receipt of the European Commission's comments.

The final outline of the report will be agreed during the inception phase.

The length of the Report will not exceed 50 pages. Additional relevant material (as ToR, case studies, methodology, list of persons interviewed, etc.) may be placed in annex.

3) Presentation and discussion of the final report

The final report will be presented in Brussels and in the beneficiary countries (seven de-briefing meetings with representatives of the beneficiaries and stakeholders listed in 2.1).

2.6.1. Quality Control

The evaluator should ensure an internal quality control during the implementing and reporting phase of the evaluation. The quality control should ensure that the draft reports comply with the above requirements and meet adequate quality standards before sending them to stakeholders for comments. The quality control should ensure consistency and coherence between findings, conclusions and recommendations. It should also ensure that findings reported are duly substantiated and that conclusions are supported by relevant judgement criteria.

The criteria and indicators for the evaluation of the outputs are presented in the Quality Assessment Grid (Annex II).

A draft report which does not meet the minimum quality requirements above will be rejected.

Evaluator's attention is drawn to the fact that the Commission reserves the right to have the reports redrafted as many times as necessary.

2.7. Language of the Specific Contract

The language of the contract and for all reporting is **English**.

3. EXPERTS PROFILE

The contractor shall provide an appropriate team of experts to complete the requested evaluation.

3.1. Number of requested experts per category and number of man-days per expert or per category

As a minimum four (4) experts are required for this assignment, namely 3 experts Category I and 1 expert Category III. The experts are expected to be available for the whole duration of the assignment.

3.2. Profile per expert or expertise required

It is assumed that the contract requires as a minimum three senior evaluators and one junior evaluator. One of the senior evaluators will assume the role of Team Leader.

1) Senior Evaluators

The minimum qualifications of **senior evaluator** include:

Qualifications and skills: Education at least Master's degree Academic Level (where a university degree has been awarded on completion of four years study in a university or equivalent institution) in social sciences, public affairs, political sciences, international relations or related field or, in its absence, at least 15 years of professional experience in the same fields.

General Professional Experience: At least 12 years of professional experience in evaluation, project management, sound financial management audit, monitoring or academic research.

Specific Professional Experience:

- At least 5 years professional experience in the field of Civil Society.
- Familiar with the European institutional environment and the Enlargement agenda in the Western Balkans and Turkey.
- Familiar with the role of civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey, including opportunities and challenges faced.
- Demonstrated interpersonal and diplomatic skills, as well as the ability to communicate effectively with all stakeholders and to present ideas clearly and effectively.
- Knowledge of any local languages in the region (WBT) will be an advantage.

2) Junior Evaluators

The minimum qualifications of **junior evaluators** include:

Qualifications and skills: Education at least Master's degree Academic Level (where a university degree has been awarded on completion of four years study in a university or equivalent institution) in social sciences, public affairs, political sciences, international relations or related field or, in its absence, at least 5 years of professional experience in the same fields.

General Professional Experience: At least 3 years of professional experience in evaluation, project cycle management, sound financial management audit, monitoring or academic research

Specific Professional Experience:

- At least 3 years professional experience in the field of Civil Society.
- Familiar with the European institutional environment and the Enlargement agenda in the Western Balkans and Turkey.
- Familiar with the role of civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey, including opportunities and challenges faced.
- Demonstrated interpersonal and diplomatic skills, as well as the ability to communicate effectively with all stakeholders and to present ideas clearly and effectively.
- Knowledge of any local languages in the region (WBT) will be an advantage.

The minimum requirement for the team as a whole are:

The contractor will make sure that the experts work in cooperation with each other. All experts will be independent and free of conflict of interest. The team as a whole should have the following:

- Knowledge and experience covering at least 80% of the sectors of implementation of CSO grants and contracts under the CSF as per background (section 1.4)
- Excellent oral and writing skills in English (level 1 in a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is "excellent" and 5 is "basic" (all the experts)
- Very good knowledge of the history, culture, social and political situation of the Western Balkans and Turkey
- Very good knowledge of the European institutional environment and the Enlargement agenda in the Western Balkans and Turkey
- Advanced understanding of democratization and civil society related issues
- At least one amongst the senior experts should have at least 5 years of experience in team leadership and drafting evaluation reports
- At least one amongst the senior experts should have at least 5 years of experience in evaluation of EU pre-accession assistance
- At least one amongst the senior experts should have at least 5 years of experience in evaluation and/or management of programmes and/or project to support civil society
- At least one of the experts should possess IT and database management capacities
- Command of the following languages would be considered an advantage: Albanian, Serbo-Croat-Bosnian, Macedonian and Turkish (team as a whole)

The offer will include the CVs of all the experts (a CV may not exceed 4 pages), of the quality controller and backstopper. References and data relevant to the assignment must be highlighted in bold (font minimum Times New Roman 12 or Arial 11). The technical proposal should include a table showing how the proposed key experts, both as a whole and for each individual expert, meet the above requirements.

The technical proposals which do not meet the minimum requirements for key experts will be rejected.

3.3 Working Language

The main working language of the assignment is English.

4. LOCATION AND DURATION

4.1. Starting period

The exact start date will be decided by DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiation, Unit D5 and communicated to the selected contractor once all the arrangements have been made. It is expected that the starting period will be January 2017.

4.2. Foreseen finishing period or duration

The expected duration of the assignment is 9 months. The assignment is expected to finish in September 2017.

4.3. Planning (indicative to be confirmed in the inception report)

Phase/Activity	Month
Briefing in Brussels	January 2017
Inception report	February 2017
Desk review	February – March 2017
Field work	March – May 2017
Briefing in Brussels and presenting preliminary findings and conclusions of the field phase	May 2017
Elaboration and submission of the draft report to stakeholders	June 2017
Incorporation of the comments from the stakeholders and submission of the final report	June 2017
Debriefing of the report in Brussels and in 7 countries	July – September 2017

4.4. Location of the assignment

The desk research will be performed at the consultant's office. The field research is expected to take place in Brussels, the Western Balkans and Turkey.

5. REPORTING

For **Reports** please see details in the “Requested Services”, in section 2.5, and "Required Outputs" in section 2.6. The Draft Reports will be submitted to the EC project manager in electronic form by e-mail. No hard copies will be required.

The **Final Evaluation Report** will be submitted in electronic form by e-mail. Upon acceptance of the report 6 hard copies of each report will be delivered to the EC.

All the reports and expected outputs shall be produced in excellent English, using the appropriate style and structuring the text in a clear and concise way. The Final evaluation report should be usable for publication.

All electronic versions have to be submitted in format compatible with MS Office software.

The EC reserves the right to request the necessary additional revisions of the reports in order to reach an appropriate outcome and quality control requirements.

6. INCIDENTAL EXPENDITURE

6.1. Items to foresee under ‘Reimbursable’

Not applicable as the contract will be a global price. Payment will be processed on the basis of outputs delivered as per 2.6.

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A reference group might be created to supervise the work of the evaluators. The selected contractor will be monitored during the assignment by D5 Section for Civil Society and Social Inclusion taking into consideration the possible comments/ requests of the Reference Group.

7.1 Definition of indicators

The criteria and indicators for the evaluation of the outputs and overall assignment are presented in the Quality Assessment Grid (Annex II).

IMPORTANT REMARKS:

- a) During all contacts with stakeholders, the Contractor will clearly identify him/herself as an independent consultant and not as an official representative of the European Commission. All reports shall clearly indicate the number of the contract on the front page and on each of the pages and carry the following disclaimer: “This report has been prepared with the financial assistance of the European Commission. The information and views set out in this [report] are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the Commission. The Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this study. Neither the Commission nor any person acting on the Commission’s behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein”. The report shall apply EC Visual Identity.
- b) The evaluation questions and methodology for this assignment may need to be further elaborated by the evaluator in the inception report.
- c) Attention is drawn to the fact that the European Commission reserves the right to have the reports redrafted as many times as necessary, and that financial penalties will be

applied if deadlines indicated for the submission of reports (drafts and final, in hard and electronic copy) are not strictly adhered to.

- d) In addition, the contract can be discontinued whenever the quality of the deliverables is insufficient in light of these terms of reference and the quality assessment criteria presented in Annex II, and when the contractors have not taken the necessary steps to remedy the insufficiencies.

ANNEX I: KEY DOCUMENTS

Key Documents for Consultation and Review

The following is a suggested list of key documents to review as part of the initial desk research. The list is not exhaustive.

- Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA I and II) 2011-2016. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/instruments/multi-beneficiary-programme/index_en.htm
- Commission Communication COM(2012) 492 final : 'The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations', Brussels 12/09/2012: Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0492:FIN:EN:PDF>
- European Commission Enlargement Strategies (2011-2015). Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/package/index_en.htm
- Multi-Country Indicative Strategy Document (2014-2020). Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2014/20140919-multi-country-strategy-paper.pdf
- Financing Decisions of the Civil Society Facility Programmes and Civil Society Facility Regional and National Action Documents for the years 2011-2013, 2014-2015 and 2016-2017. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/instruments/multi-beneficiary-programme/index_en.htm (see bottom of the page under different years):
 - Decision 2011/22-965 and 2012/23-324 (allocations for 2011 and 2012)
 - Decision 2013/024-081 (allocations for 2013)
 - Decision 2014/031-605 and 2015/037-653 (allocations for 2014 and 2015)
 - Decision 2016/038-960 (allocations for 2016) and CSF and Media Programme 2017 not yet approved and available upon request at DG NEAR D5.
- Guidelines for EU support to Civil Society in enlargement countries 2014-2020: Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/civil_society/doc_guidelines_cs_support.pdf
- Civil Society Facility projects Database (Western Balkans and Turkey) (2011-2015). Available upon request
- TACSO Baseline and Monitoring reports for 2013, 2014 and 2015. Available at: http://www.tacso.org/documents/otherdoc/?id=9887&template_id=73&langTag=en-US
- Thematic Evaluation of EU's Support to Civil Society in the Western Balkans (namely, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo under UNSCR 1244, Montenegro and Serbia) and Turkey 2012. http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/financial_assistance/phare/evaluation/2012_eval_cs_final_report_2.pdf
- Mid-term Review of Partnership Programmes for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). August 2014. Available upon request at DG NEAR Unit D5
- Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations (TACSO) needs assessment reports. Available at:

http://www.tacso.org/documents/reports/Archive.aspx?langTag=en-US&template_id=73&pageIndex=3

- Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) reports of projects financed by the CSF Programmes. Available upon request
- DG NEAR Unit D5 mission reports. Available upon request
- Relevant National Strategies for civil society development
- Available publications, surveys and reviews.

ANNEX II: QUALITY ASSESSMENT GRID

	Very weak	Weak	Good	Very good	Excellent
1. Meeting needs:					
a.	Does the report describe precisely what is to be evaluated, including the intervention logic?				
b.	Does the report cover the requested period, and clearly includes the target groups and socio-geographical areas linked to the project / programme?				
c.	Has the evolution of the project / programme been taken into account in the evaluation process?				
d.	Does the evaluation deal with and respond to all ToR requests? If not, are justifications given?				
2. Appropriate design :					
a.	Does the report explain how the evaluation design takes into account the project / programme rationale, cause-effect relationships, impacts, policy context, stakeholders' interests, etc.?				
b.	Is the evaluation method clearly and adequately described in enough detail?				
c.	Are there well-defined indicators selected in order to provide evidence about the project / programme and its context?				
d.	Does the report point out the limitations, risks and potential biases associated with the evaluation method?				
3. Reliable data :					
a.	Is the data collection approach explained and is it coherent with the overall evaluation design?				
b.	Have data collection limitations and biases been explained and discussed?				
c.	Are the sources of information clearly identified in the report?				
d.	Are the data collection tools (samples, focus groups, etc.) applied in accordance with standards?				
e.	Have the collected data been cross-checked?				
4. Sound analysis :					
a.	Is the analysis based on the collected data?				

	Very weak	Weak	Good	Very good	Excellent
b. Does the analysis focus well on the most relevant cause/effect assumptions underlying the intervention logic?					
c. Is the context taken into account adequately in the analysis?					
d. Are inputs from the most important stakeholders used in a balanced way?					
e. Are the limitations of the analysis identified, discussed and presented in the report, as well as the contradictions with available knowledge, if there are any?					
5. Credible findings :					
a. Are the findings derived from the qualitative and quantitative data and analyses?					
b. Is there a discussion whether the findings can be generalised?					
c. Are interpretations and extrapolations justified and supported by sound arguments?					
6. Valid conclusions :					
a. Are the conclusions coherent and logically linked to the findings?					
b. Does the report draw overall conclusions on each of the five DAC criteria?					
c. Are conclusions free of personal or partisan considerations?					
7. Useful recommendations :					
a. Are the recommendations consistent with the conclusions?					
b. Are recommendations operational, realistic and sufficiently explicit to provide guidelines for taking action?					
c. Are the recommendations drafted for the different target stakeholders of the evaluation?					
d. When necessary, have the recommendations been clustered and prioritised?					
8. Clear report :					
a. Does the report include a relevant and concise executive summary?					
b. Is the report well-structured and adapted to its various audiences?					

	Very weak	Weak	Good	Very good	Excellent
c. Are specialised concepts clearly defined and not used more than necessary? Is there a list of acronyms?					
d. Is the length of the various chapters and annexes well balanced?					

Legend: *very weak* = criteria mostly not fulfilled or absent; *weak* = criteria partially fulfilled; *good* = criteria mostly fulfilled; *very good* = criteria entirely fulfilled; *excellent* = criteria entirely fulfilled in a clear and original way

Comments on meeting needs (1):
Comments on appropriate design (2):
Comments on reliable data (3):
Comments on sound analysis (4):
Comments on credible findings (5):
Comments on valid conclusions (6):
Comments on useful recommendations (7):

Comments on clear report (8):
Comments on the overall quality of the report
<p>The report could be approved in its current state, as it overall complies with the contractual conditions and relevant professional evaluation standards [Yes, No]</p>

7.2 Annex/ Appendix 2 - Evaluation approach and methodology

7.2.1 General approach

The evaluation was undertaken with a well-trying and robust **evaluation methodology**, grounded in the descriptions in the *Guidelines*. The evaluation team was guided by the key principles laid down in the Guidelines. The main approach was:

- The organisation of the evaluation through the definition/ refinement of the Evaluation Questions from the ToR, development of a judgement criteria and judgement indicators which were used in answering the Evaluation Questions and determining the methodology to be followed.
- The collection of available quantitative and qualitative information from primary and secondary sources (document review, survey and focus group/ interview processes) that enabled the Evaluation Questions to be answered.
- The analysis of the gathered information to assess the impact of the intervention in the context of agreed Evaluation Criteria/ Questions.

In the light of this analysis, a synthesis of findings was undertaken that formulated answers to the Evaluation Questions, drew conclusions on the success of the CSF, and enabled the drafting of recommendations for future interventions, based on lessons learned. This synthesis and formulation is the basis of this current document.

7.2.2 Participatory approach

There was a clear focus in the evaluation ToR, and emphasised in the evaluation's Kick-off Meeting, that the approach of the evaluation team should be on a participatory and transparent process of evaluation. The evaluation team took on board, and emphasised in it planning discussions and preparations, the need for a constant emphasis on consultation with local/ regional actors, as well as an emphasis on the sharing of preliminary feedback and outcomes. The clear intent of this approach was to improve the outcomes of the evaluation through a feedback process that strengthened analysis – so the intent is not on an 'evaluation report' but on an 'evaluation process'.

The evaluation team gave consideration in its field planning to the different potential participatory mechanisms likely to be available in beneficiary countries, including participation in briefings to Local Advisory Groups, sharing evaluation status with currently planned TACSO events that coincide with field work and other potential events/briefing sessions with stakeholders. One specific type of potential sharing/participatory event are multi-beneficiary events of DG NEAR, such as the bi-annual IPA multi-beneficiary conferences. Planned events and ongoing/ current coordination/ participation platforms were mapped during the planning phase, and it is intended to undertake a debriefing event in each of the beneficiary countries and in Brussels.

7.2.3 Evaluation Phases

7.2.3.1 Desk Review - Inception phase

The purpose of the Inception Phase was to confirm the objectives, scope and outputs of the evaluation, to develop a final version of the evaluation questions, judgement criteria and indicators, and to set out the methodological approach, work plan and time schedule. These were recorded in the Inception Report. The Inception Phase was critical to all evaluation processes and to the ultimate success of the Evaluation, as it ensured the Evaluation Team's understanding of the needs of beneficiary countries and the EC and the EC's understanding of what approach the evaluation team would take to both its data gathering and its analysis. Following mobilisation, and an internal team briefing, the evaluation team undertook the following:

- Kick-off meeting in Brussels.
- Conducted preliminary interviews.

- Collection and analysis of relevant documentation and data, including past evaluations/ studies and reports, ROM reports, available publications and surveys. The full list of documents reviewed as part of the evaluation is found at Annex 11.
- Analysis of the CSF Project Database.
- Definition of a project sampling approach.
- Review, refinement (and agreement with DG NEAR) of the set of evaluation questions.
- Development of appropriate, related judgement criteria.
- Development and finalisation of related indicators, for use in both quantitative and qualitative assessment processes, and definition of means of verification.
- Design of the questionnaire for structured interviews undertaken as part of qualitative processes.
- Design, development and structuring of the survey conducted with all beneficiaries.
- Finalisation of the work plan for the evaluation, including the detailed time schedule and evaluator assignments.
- Preparation and quality control of the Inception Report.
- Submission of the draft Inception Report, including the proposed structure of the (Draft) Final Evaluation Report and of the proposed ad hoc Survey Report⁷ as agreed during the Inception Phase.
- Submission of the final version of the Inception Report, following feedback from a range of stakeholders, through DG NEAR. Following approval of the Inception Report, the evaluation moved to the Field Phase.

7.2.3.2 Field phase

During the field phase, the evaluation team worked in Brussels and in the beneficiary countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia⁸, Kosovo⁹, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey). There were three key components of the field phase, a survey, qualitative interviews with stakeholders and sharing of preliminary analyses which enabled reflection on early perspectives of findings and conclusions.

7.2.3.2.1 Survey

A complete survey was undertaken of all CSF beneficiaries. The survey was structured around the agreed Evaluation Questions. Results of the survey form a key component of the evaluation's findings and analysis, and are found throughout the narrative of this Evaluation Report. The results of the survey were also structured into a specific Survey Report provided to DG NEAR on 30 June, as an early output of the evaluation. This Survey Report is found, in its entirety, at Annex 13.

7.2.3.2.2 Interviews

The evaluation team conducted a wide range of interviews based on an agreed selection of stakeholders. The full list of interviewees is found at Annex 10.

The following provides a summary of the demographics of interviewees.

- A total of 186 people were interviewed. This total is represented by the following:
 - DG NEAR – 5
 - Other EC representatives in Brussels – 3
 - EUD representatives – 18
 - National authority representatives – 22
 - Civil society representatives – 127
 - International project implementers – 4
 - Other donors - 7

⁷ The Survey Report, not requested in the ToR, was proposed by the evaluation team and accepted at the Kick-off Meeting.

⁸ While there are no specific projects with Croatia as the key/ lead country, Croatia was a part of the programme in its early stages and there are multi-beneficiary projects which include Croatia.

⁹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

These qualitative processes included personal interviews, focus groups/ group interviews, meetings in Brussels and in the beneficiary countries. Some interviews were done via Skype/ telephone, and some were undertaken (or enhanced, or followed up) via email questionnaires, although these were not the focus of the qualitative work of the evaluation.

7.2.3.3 Synthesis phase

In the synthesis phase, all collected documentation, inputs, feedback and results of the survey, interviews and focus groups has been analysed. The evaluation team has, based on this material and the analysis undertaken by the team, prepared this Evaluation Report. Judgement criteria and indicators have been applied to derive evaluation findings that are accurate and verifiable, and the Evaluation Report provides detailed evidence of the findings of the evaluation, against the agreed upon Evaluation Questions.

Conclusions have been based on these findings, and the operational recommendations found below follow logically from these findings and conclusions/ lessons learned.

7.2.4 Qualitative interviews with a selection of beneficiary organisations

The first, and most important aspect of the evaluation team's usage of the CSF Database was in determining the selection criteria for projects to be visited. With over 360 projects in total that have been funded through the CSF, in the period under review, it was not possible to do a qualitative approach with each project. The selection criteria enabled the evaluation team to select projects to be physically visited, from the list made available by DG NEAR, while covering the full range of areas of enquiry required in the Terms of Reference. In this context, and as defined in the ToR, a selection of projects for qualitative review was prepared, based on project titles, the basic description of activities as available in the DG NEAR database or public award notices, and the criteria established by the evaluation team.

In order to select projects to be visited, the evaluation team established the selection criteria based on some critical parameters. The four main criteria, although not the only ones used in making a selection, were:

- Ensuring a *sufficient sample size* of projects to be visited.
- Ensuring a *geographical spread* of projects to be visited.
- Ensuring a *thematic spread* of projects to be visited.
- Ensuring a spread of the instruments of implementation for projects to be visited and assessed.

Once these four key criteria were used to prepare an initial list of projects to be visited, a further analysis was made, addressing another set of criteria which were deemed important for consideration but were not considered critical to the overall balance of selection. These other criteria were:

- *Contract year* – to ensure a level of spread across all years being assessed, esp. between closed and on-going projects.
- *Duration of the project* – to ensure not all short-term or long-term project comprised the sample.
- *Size of the project* – to ensure a spread of size, although a greater emphasis was on ensuring there was not an over-representation of small or smaller projects.
- *Partnerships*, including partnerships with/ role of public authorities – to ensure at least some consideration/ analysis of partnership processes in design, contracting and implementation of projects.
- Specific location of the project (urban/rural).

Some further discussion follows with regards the four critical criteria.

A full listing of projects proposed for face-to-face visits during the field phase can be found below (chapter 7.2.4.6).

7.2.4.1 Sufficient sample size

The evaluation team needed to balance the physical demands of field enquiry, within the available time and resource framework, with the need to have sufficient qualitative feedback from stakeholders, and

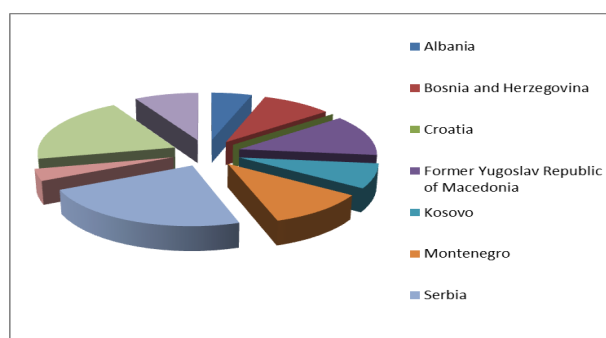
particularly from a wide range of project implementers. It was determined that 20% of projects/ contracts (in number, 72.4), would be visited for face-to-face enquiry. In practice, a total of 74 projects were selected. These 74 projects were selected within the framework of the other three key criteria. This selection is detailed in the sections below.

7.2.4.2 CSF geographical focus

Analysis of Projects has been undertaken geographically. The geographic categorisation includes specific beneficiary countries where only one country is included in a Project, multi-beneficiary Projects and Projects that include all countries in the Western Balkans and Turkey (a specific type of multi-beneficiary Project). The categories are as follows:

Geographical Focus	Number of Contracts	Total EU Budget per the Database	Number to be Selected Based on 20%	Number Selected
Albania	19	EUR 6,087,544	3.80	4
BiH	33	EUR 12,912,470	6.60	7
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	45	EUR 9,911,482	9.00	9
Kosovo	27	EUR 8,544,842	5.40	4
Montenegro	39	EUR 6,688,387	7.80	8
Serbia	84	EUR 12,600,920	18.00	15
Turkey	13	EUR 11,058,604	2.60	3
WB and Turkey ¹⁰	29	EUR 27,960,887	19.2	24
Multi-beneficiary ¹¹	73	EUR 35,055,931		
Total	362	EUR 130,821,066	72.4	74

The breakdown of projects shows a relatively high share of Serbia (84 projects), followed by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (45) and Montenegro (39) and a considerably smaller number of projects in Turkey (13). It is noted that the average EU budget of the projects in Turkey is considerably higher the overall average. The multi-beneficiary (multi-country and WBT) projects represent a significant share of the total (103).



7.2.4.3 CSF themes

As part of its Inception Phase analysis, and to assist in cross analysis, quantitative processes and categorisations of types of initiatives, the evaluation team prepared a categorisation of the Themes of work/ actions of all projects funded by the CSF that are included in the available database. The following categories were used in the selection process for the evaluation's qualitative processes (i.e. selection of projects for interview) as well as overall analysis categories from both quantitative (the survey) and qualitative processes.

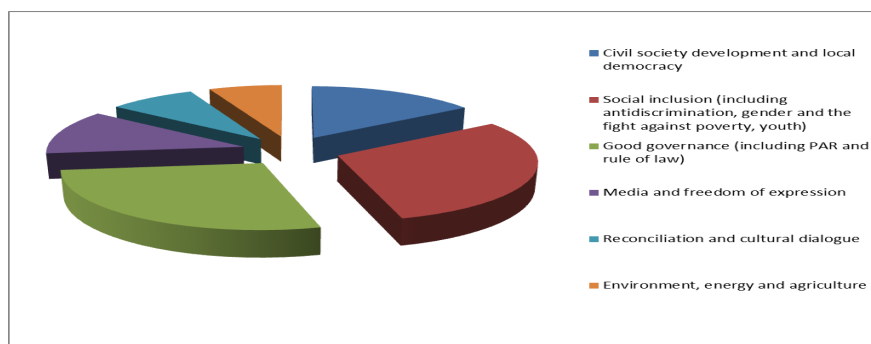
¹⁰ This description is for contracts/ projects which focus on ALL countries in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

¹¹ This description is for contracts/ projects which focus on more than one beneficiary country (but NOT all countries).

CSF Theme	Number of Contracts	Number to be Selected Based on 20%	Number Selected
Civil society development and local democracy	54	11	15
Social inclusion (including antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth)	109	22	22
Good governance (including PAR and rule of law)	97	19	19
Media and freedom of expression	46	9	8
Reconciliation and cultural dialogue	32	6	5
Environment, energy and agriculture	24	5	5
Total	362	72	74

The use of these themes, and categorisation of projects in the database according to these categories, is a process that has some complexities, which the evaluation team addressed during the inception phase.

Social inclusion projects (109) represent 30% of the total, followed by Good Governance (100) with 28%. Media and Freedom of Expression projects account for 12%.



7.2.4.4 CSF implementing instruments

Per the categories in the evaluation Terms of Reference, the evaluation team prepared a categorisation of all Projects for use in its selection process for qualitative processes during the evaluation. The categories are found in the table below, together with a more detailed description of each of them.

Category	Description	Number Of Funded Contracts	Number Selected Based on 20%	Number Selected
Short, medium and long-term action grants	Action grants/open calls, Action grants/restricted calls (excluding FPAs).	272	54	55
Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs)	Action grants/open calls-multi-beneficiary + Exception for COP/Action Grants/ Specific grant awarded under a framework partnership (art. 178 RAP)/ see column O/Nature or Action grants awarded under Framework Partnership (FPA= 2 +2 Action Grants).	33	7	6
Operating grants	Functioning grants (operational).	32	6	5
Direct grants to International Organisations and CSOs	Implementation/Implementation-Financing agreement (see column P/Contract type), Exception for COP/Exceptions to call for proposals: Technical competence,	9	2	2

	specialisation or administrative power, Action grants that require technical competence/high degree of specialization, Bodies with de jure or de facto monopoly, Bodies identified by a basic act as beneficiaries, Action grants that require technical competence/high degree of specialization.			
Technical Assistance (TACSO + TA for Governments/E C)	Implementation/Implementation Restricted call-see column P/Technical assistance and/or Services, Services-Procurement and P2P component part of TACSO project no. 325596 (see Implementation/Implementation Restricted call-see column P/Technical assistance and/or Services.	16	3	6
Total		362	72	74

Table 1 - CSF Implementation Instruments

7.2.4.5 Breakdown of the number of selected projects per selection criteria

As described above, a total of 74 projects have been tentatively selected for visits. The following table shows the breakdown of project numbers per the selection criteria.

Criteria	Criteria Component	Selected Number Of Funded Contracts
Geographic Focus	Albania	4
	BiH	7
	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	9
	Kosovo	4
	Montenegro	8
	Serbia	15
	Turkey	3
	WB and Turkey	24
	Multi-Beneficiary	
	Total	74
Thematic Focus	Civil society development and local democracy	15
	Social inclusion (including antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth)	22
	Good governance (including PAR and rule of law)	19
	Media and freedom of expression	8
	Reconciliation and cultural dialogue	5
	Environment, energy and agriculture	5
	Total	74
Implementing Instrument	Short, medium and long-term action grants	55
	Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs)	6
	Operating grants	5

	Direct grants to International Organisations and CSOs	2
	Technical Assistance (TACSO + TA for Gov/EC,EUD) and regional and national events, study visits (P2P programme)	6
	Total	74

Table 2 - Number of selected projects per selection criteria.

7.2.4.6 Detailed listing of CSF projects visited during the evaluation field work, according to selection criteria

The table below lists the projects to be retained for the evaluation sample. The proposed coverage ensures that adequate representation of all aspects of the CSF programme is reflected in project interviews.

Contract Number	Project Title	Geographic Focus	Thematic Focus	Implementation Instrument
Short, medium and long-term action grants				
ALBANIA				
330583	"Bolstering the Role of Courts in Sustaining Freedom of Expression in Albania"	Albania	Media and freedom of expression	Short, medium and long-term action grants
331531	Sustainable Multi-purpose Centre in Tirana Municipality Unit no.7	Albania	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
353791	'Achieve – Albanian Civil Society for a European Environment	Albania	Environment, climate action, energy and agriculture	Short, medium and long-term action grants
370476	CIVILISC - Civil Society Instruments against Corruption	Albania	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Short, medium and long-term action grants
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA				
310583	Monitoring of implementation of youth policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina	BiH	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
310808	Voice of Children	BiH	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
310826	Environment Friendly Energy Coalition Team	BiH	Environment, climate action, energy and agriculture	Short, medium and long-term action grants
368538	BASE - Building Accountability and Systems in the Elections	BiH	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Short, medium and long-term action grants
370829	Integrity through Justice: Independent civil society monitoring and assessment of judicial response to corruption	BiH	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Short, medium and long-term action grants
THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA				
333686	CSOs Watchdog Network to Prevent Spoils and Conflict of Interest in the Public Administration	the former Yugoslav	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Short, medium and long-term action grants

Contract Number	Project Title	Geographic Focus	Thematic Focus	Implementation Instrument
		Republic of Macedonia		
333780	Network 23	the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Short, medium and long-term action grants
338806	Youth Entrepreneurship Support Network	the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
370681	ReForMedia - Citizens, CSOs and Institutional Reforming Media in Macedonia	the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Media and freedom of expression	Short, medium and long-term action grants
370964	IPA 2 Mechanism for Civil Society Organisations	the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Short, medium and long-term action grants
338852	Coalition for Budget Monitoring	the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Short, medium and long-term action grants
371474	Roma CSO Network - Roma Community's Response	the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
371838	Stronger CSOs for participatory transposition and implementation of the EU 2020 climate and Energy Package	the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Environment, climate action, energy and agriculture	Short, medium and long-term action grants
369849	Diversity is trendy - promoting local multiculturalism!	the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Reconciliation and cultural dialogue	Short, medium and long-term action grants
KOSOVO				

Contract Number	Project Title	Geographic Focus	Thematic Focus	Implementation Instrument
371879	Sub-granting scheme for grass-root CSOs advocacy initiatives in Kosovo	Kosovo	Civil society development and local democracy	Short, medium and long-term action grants
372147	Kosovo education for employment network (KEEN)	Kosovo	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
MONTENEGRO				
306400	Open Mind – Organisation of the Participation in Enlarged Networks: Montenegro is Inclusive, Not Discriminatory	Montenegro	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
306435	Local coalitions for community development	Montenegro	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Short, medium and long-term action grants
345136	De facto strong	Montenegro	Civil society development and local democracy	Short, medium and long-term action grants
345161	Speed up ! Enhance the role of CSO in Montenegrin social policies development and implementation	Montenegro	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
346860	Judicial Reform Monitoring	Montenegro	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Short, medium and long-term action grants
371015	Social Entrepreneurship: A Step towards Independence	Montenegro	Social entrepreneurship, women's economic empowerment, capacity building of small CSOs	Short, medium and long-term action grants
374391	Health Up - Contribution of civil society to strengthening partnership dialogue and cooperation between non-governmental and governmental sector in the health system	Montenegro	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Short, medium and long-term action grants
SERBIA				
307263	Local Networking for Sustainable Development	Serbia	Civil society development and local democracy	Short, medium and long-term action grants
307357	Women in Progress – Capacity building at the local level for gender economic mainstreaming in Serbia	Serbia	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
307367	Illustrated Glossary of Corruption	Serbia	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Short, medium and long-term action grants
307557	Stop Corruption that Threatens Decent Work	Serbia	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Short, medium and long-term action grants

Contract Number	Project Title	Geographic Focus	Thematic Focus	Implementation Instrument
333319	Equal in Social Service Providing	Serbia	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
333329	ReForce – Reinforcing the Role of Civil Society Organisations in Community Development and Public Administration Reform	Serbia	Civil society development and local democracy	Short, medium and long-term action grants
333334	The Context Studies: The Diversity of the Diversity	Serbia	Reconciliation and cultural dialogue	Short, medium and long-term action grants
333238	We plan strategically – and contribute to an accelerated development of local community	Serbia	Civil society development and local democracy	Short, medium and long-term action grants
333303	Networking for Community Child-Oriented model	Serbia	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
353621	Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre	Serbia	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Short, medium and long-term action grants
372030	Access to my rights (through Ombudsman cases)	Serbia	Media and freedom of expression	Short, medium and long-term action grants
372167	local watchdogs	Serbia	Media and freedom of expression	Short, medium and long-term action grants
383180	Providing Effective Support To The Members Of The Most Discriminated Groups And Their Organizations	Serbia	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
383186	"Public Money for Public Interest" - supporting civil society initiative for public interest	Serbia	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Short, medium and long-term action grants
371964	Ordinary people: Missing rights - finding solutions	Multi-beneficiary	Media and freedom of expression	Short, medium and long-term action grants
TURKEY				
352923	Turkey's Prison Information Network (TPIN)	Turkey	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Short, medium and long-term action grants
332438	Diversity and Litigation Platform Turkey	Turkey	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
MULTI-BENEFICIARY				
332758	Civic Response to Clientelism in Media - MEDIA CIRCLE	Multi-beneficiary	Media and freedom of expression	Short, medium and long-term action grants

Contract Number	Project Title	Geographic Focus	Thematic Focus	Implementation Instrument
369846	Western Balkan's Regional Platform for Advocating Media Freedom and journalists' safety	Multi-beneficiary	Media and freedom of expression	Short, medium and long-term action grants
370038	WeBER - Western Balkans Enabling Project for Civil Society Monitoring of Public Administration Reform	Multi-beneficiary	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Short, medium and long-term action grants
370114	SE Europe Transnational CSO Coalition for Women and Child Protection Against Human Trafficking and Gender-based Violence - STOP	Multi-beneficiary	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
370287	Taking action on social inclusion of older people	Multi-beneficiary	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
370394	Youth Banks Hubs or Western Balkans and Turkey	Multi-beneficiary	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
364189	Strengthening the RECOM Process (Phase II)	Multi-beneficiary	Reconciliation and cultural dialogue	Short, medium and long-term action grants (exception)
370628	ARYSE (At-Risk Youth Social Empowerment	Multi-beneficiary	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
371198	Civil Society acts for environmentally sound socio-economic development	Multi-beneficiary	Environment, climate action, energy and agriculture	Short, medium and long-term action grants
370300	Joint initiative to Empower Roma Civil Society on the Western Balkans and Tukey	Western Balkans and Turkey (WB and Turkey)	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
370371	ALTER - Active Local Territories for Economic Development of Rural Areas	Western Balkans and Turkey (WB and Turkey)	Civil society development and local democracy	Short, medium and long-term action grants
Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs)				
306161	Towards efficient public Procurement Mechanisms in the EU (potential) Candidate Countries	Multi-beneficiary	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs)
306172	Sign for Sustainability	Multi-beneficiary	Civil society development and local democracy	Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs)

Contract Number	Project Title	Geographic Focus	Thematic Focus	Implementation Instrument
306530	Improving the Provision of Social Service Delivery in South Eastern Europe through the empowerment of national and regional CSO networks	Multi-beneficiary	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs)
306649	PERSON (Partnership to Ensure Reform of Support in other Nations)	Multi-beneficiary	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs)
307460	South East Europe Sustainable Energy Policy or SEE SEP	Multi-beneficiary	Environment, climate action, energy and agriculture	Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs)
307476	Civil Society for Good Governance and Anti-Corruption in Southeast Europe: Capacity Building for Monitoring, Advocacy and Awareness Raising	Western Balkans and Turkey (WB and Turkey)	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs)
Operating grants				
351845	Regional Youth Exchange Association	Multi-beneficiary	Reconciliation and cultural dialogue	Operating grants
351847	European Integration and the social dimension: strengthening regional cooperation of trade unions in the Balkans	Multi-beneficiary	Civil society development and local democracy	Operating grants
351850	Western Balkans Pulse for Police Integrity and Trust (POINT)	Multi-beneficiary	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Operating grants
351960	Towards a Western Balkans and Turkey LGBTI Human Rights Regional Association	Western Balkans and Turkey (WB and Turkey)	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Operating grants
373876	Work Programme - Reconciliation between communities	Kosovo	Reconciliation and cultural dialogue	Operating grants
Direct grants to International Organisations and CSOs				
293657	Reinforcement of Local Democracy	BiH	Civil society development and local democracy	Direct grants to International Organisations and CSOs
305617	Media Accountability in South East Europe	Multi-beneficiary	Media and freedom of expression	Direct grants to International Organisations and CSOs
Technical Assistance				
307594	Technical Assistance to the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society (Serbia)	Serbia	Civil society development and local democracy	Technical Assistance (TACSO + TA for Gov/EC,EUD) and

Contract Number	Project Title	Geographic Focus	Thematic Focus	Implementation Instrument
				regional and national events, study visits (P2P programme)
307716	Capacity building of government institutions to engage in a policy dialogue with civil society	BiH	Civil society development and local democracy	Technical Assistance (TACSO + TA for Gov/EC,EUD) and regional and national events, study visits (P2P programme)
325596	Technical Assistance to the Civil Society Organisations (TACSO 2) from the IPA beneficiaries (1/2) + P2P	Western Balkans and Turkey (WB and Turkey)	Civil society development and local democracy	Technical Assistance (TACSO + TA for Gov/EC,EUD) and regional and national events, study visits (P2P programme)
370752	Civil Society Facility (Sivil Düşün II)	Turkey	Civil society development and local democracy	Technical Assistance (TACSO + TA for Gov/EC,EUD) and regional and national events, study visits (P2P programme)
373104	Technical cooperation for the development of institutional mechanisms for the cooperation between the government and non-governmental organisations in Montenegro	Montenegro	Civil society development and local democracy	Technical Assistance (TACSO + TA for Gov/EC,EUD) and regional and national events, study visits (P2P programme)
372768	Improving Governance - Empowering Civil Society - Lot 2: Support to the implementation of the Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society	Kosovo	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Technical Assistance (TACSO + TA for Gov/EC,EUD) and regional and national events, study visits (P2P programme)

Table 3 - CSF projects to be visited.

7.2.5 A survey of all beneficiary organisations

As requested by the ToR, all CSOs that have implemented projects funded by the CSF during the period being reviewed (2011-2016) were invited to participate in an online survey. The full report of the survey – approach and findings – is found at Annex 13. The following is a summary of the approach taken with the survey.

7.2.5.1 The survey questionnaire

The survey questionnaire comprised a section on organisation/ project data, a section for provision of feedback on the CSF, generally in line with the Evaluation Questions and a section on lessons learned and recommendations. All questions were quantitative/ multiple choice, with the exception of the questions on lessons learned and recommendations. As well, a number of questions included an option for additional, narrative comments should respondents have wished to add further detail.

The survey questionnaire had three sections with 54 questions:

- **Organisational data** – with questions specifically related to the type of organisation completing the survey. CSOs in the region had 19 questions in this section, IGOs and consultancies/ firms each had 10.
- **Feedback on the CSF** – there were 33 questions in this section, 7 on relevance, 7 on efficiency, 7 on effectiveness, 3 on impact, 3 on sustainability, 2 on cross-cutting issues and two on visibility. While the focus of these questions was quantitative responses and analysis, a number of these questions provided for a narrative component as well.
- **Lessons learned and recommendations** – there was one question on lessons learned and one question on recommendations. Both of these questions allowed only a free text, narrative response.

7.2.5.2 Survey implementation

The online survey software LimeSurvey (<https://www.limesurvey.org>) was used to implement the survey. The survey software provided a wide range of services for the type of survey undertaken in the evaluation, including services that assisted with analysis, including skip logic, data exporting and reporting, statistical analysis and text analysis. As 800+ survey responses were sought, a technical facilitation of the analysis of the responses was critical.

7.2.5.3 Invitation Process and List

Email invitations were sent to each intended participant organisation. Per the Terms of Reference, this comprised a total of some 633 organisations in the region and 136 EU-based organisations. In fact, a total of 836 organisations, 685 located in the region and 149 EU-based¹² were initially targeted for the survey, although only 799 total survey invitations were sent out due to the inability to find contact details (or the closure of an organisation). The evaluation team undertook to insure that each of these organisations were invited to participate in the survey with reminders and additional requests to respond. However, the completeness and quality of contact details for the target group of funded organisations was problematic. There is no contact list for funded/ contracted organisations, either within DG NEAR systems or between DG NEAR and EUDs. Contact details (notably email addresses) for *applicants*¹³ are, generally, available, but not necessarily in any readily accessible electronic form. Contact details for *partners*¹⁴ (specifically email addresses) are not, generally, available. Where there is an electronically accessible version of partner email addresses they are usually found together with a wide range of other data in a single cell in an Excel database, requiring manual extraction. The evaluation team needed to do manual research (online google searches, phone calls, requests to applicants during interviews) to get more up-to-date and useable details. The evaluation team engaged a support resource for much of this process, and ultimately the survey process in general was delayed for some time to ensure as wide a representation as possible.

¹² Including Croatia.

¹³ Terminology used in the CSF's Grant Application Form for the key applicant organisation.

¹⁴ Terminology used in the CSF's Grant Application Form for other organisations formally involved in and contract to deliver the project/ contract.

Email invitations included an explanation of the intent and content of the evaluation and the survey, and a link to the online survey software. The introductory email also indicated the closing date for the survey. A follow-up strategy was developed, and follow-up communications were undertaken to encourage the greatest participation possible, although it is noted that participation was voluntary – the evaluation team had no control over the response rate.

7.2.5.4 Number And Demographic Of Responses

A total of 315 organisations initiated their responses process to the survey. Of these 315 organisations, 262 provided data for analysis. A total of 250 were complete responses to all questions. As well as these 250, a further 12 organisations responded in whole or in part to questions in the second section of the survey – Feedback on the CSF, without providing any organisational details. As will be seen below, the organisational analysis section makes use of the responses from the 250 completed responses and the Feedback in the CSF section also incorporates the other 12 respondents.

7.2.6 Evaluation frame

7.2.6.1 Methodological approach for responding to the evaluation questions

This section outlines the approach the evaluators have used to gather and analyse information to respond adequately to the Evaluation Questions. This approach ensured consistency of data collection in the field phase, across the whole of the evaluation team, and enabled consistent analysis during the synthesis phase.

The Evaluation Matrix (Annex 12)) gives a detailed overview of the set of agreed evaluation questions, the judgement criteria that were used to supplement any existing indicators of achievement, as well as the sources of information and methodology that were used when answering the evaluation questions.

The design of the assessment methodology is based on the objectives and scope defined by the ToR. The methodology consists of initial data collection, document research, an extensive survey, semi-structured interviews and focus group meetings during field visits with public authorities, beneficiary institutions, and EC representatives.

7.2.6.2 Triangulation

An important part of the process was verification of facts (triangulation) undertaken by direct and indirect interviews. Empirical data from field work not only complemented the document review process, but provided insights to particular CSF features, going beyond basic information. Face-to-face interviews with stakeholders, using semi-structured interview techniques, were an effective approach for the evaluation team to gather quality feedback from the full range of stakeholders. Denzin¹⁵ identified four basic types of triangulation:

- Data triangulation: involves time, space, and persons.
- Investigator triangulation: involves multiple researchers in an investigation.
- Theory triangulation: involves using more than one theoretical scheme in the interpretation of the phenomenon.
- Methodological triangulation: involves using more than one method to gather data, such as interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documents.

Of these four basic types of triangulation, this evaluation made some use of data triangulation, including primary and secondary data and data sources, investigator triangulation, involving six investigators (4 women and 2 men), from six different backgrounds and training, and methodological triangulation, involving an extensive survey, a document review and field interviews with a variety of stakeholders

¹⁵ Denzin, N. (2006). *Sociological Methods: A Sourcebook*. Aldine Transaction.

such as donors, stakeholders in national and local authorities, EU staff in EUDs and at DG NEAR, and representatives of beneficiary organisations and other CSOs.

7.2.6.3 Consistency and Coordination with Other Evaluations

The ToR have requested ensuring the consistency and coordination of the CSF mid-term evaluation with other evaluations concerning support to civil society as well as with ROM exercises planned or ongoing in the same period, in the geographical areas under DG NEAR responsibility. For this purpose, the following evaluations have been considered¹⁶.

Evaluation	Comments/Observations
Thematic evaluation of EU's support to civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey (April 2012)	<p>Its key recommendations have been to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen internal and external monitoring of EU's support; • Promote wider use of thematic small grant schemes and introduce more flexibility; • Support stronger participation of CS in territorial and socio-economic development of the IPA countries, more particularly as driving forces for further regional integration, including reconciliation. <p>It can be observed in this evaluation that these recommendations have been taken on board in designing and implementing the CSF.</p>
Final evaluation of Sivil Dusun Programme "Civil Society Facility (CSF) - Turkey window"	<p>The global objective of this assignment is to carry out the final evaluation of Sivil Dusun Programme I (contracts IPA/2012/306-893 and IPA/2014/352-653 centrally managed by the EU Delegation to Turkey in the framework of the Civil Society Facility - Turkey window). The evaluation will provide findings and recommendations to assist the EU Delegation to Turkey in the programming and implementation of upcoming supports to civil society in Turkey, and more particularly of the third phase of Sivil Dusun Active Citizenship Mechanism due to start by-mid 2018.</p> <p>This ongoing evaluation has been fully taken into consideration and needed consultation has taken place between the two evaluation teams, in order to make sure that the outputs of the overall CSF evaluation and this specific evaluation will be complementary and together provide a comprehensive assessment of this programme and its general context.</p>
Evaluation of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) (Draft Report Volume 1, January 2017)	This evaluation has not devoted a specific component to the CS and its involvement in the IPA II preparation and implementation.
Evaluation of the EU support to social protection in external action 2007-2013	The objective of the evaluation is to assess the EU support provided in external action for social protection launched in the period 2007-2013. The evaluation should provide an assessment on the attained results, their impact and sustainability, the good practices and pitfalls in IPA I, ENPI, DCI and EDF programming and implementation. Evaluation is currently underway.
Thematic Evaluation on Support to Economic Governance in Enlargement	The global objective of this evaluation has been to provide findings and recommendations to assist DG NEAR in streamlining its approach to economic governance and improving its programming of

¹⁶ ROM feedback has been channelled through the delivery of the projects' documentation, received from DG NEAR and EUDs.

and Neighbourhood Countries	EU assistance, targeting support to economic governance in enlargement countries, based on the lessons learned and good practices of previous related projects as well as the relevant strategic orientation. The evaluation has encompassed an overview of the CS' involvement and in particular the EU-funded CS projects involved in Economic Governance in the wider frame of the PAR.
Evaluation on support to SME competitiveness in Enlargement and Neighbourhood Countries (draft final report, January 2017)	Its overall objective is to shed light on results of past interventions of the EU in support of SME development in the regions concerned as well as to judge whether the new approach developed for supporting competitiveness is well suited and reflected in new programming. It has not devoted a specific component to assessment of the CS-related aspects.
Thematic evaluation on IPA and ENI support to Public Administration Reform (ongoing as of mid-July 2017)	Its focus is mostly on the enlargement countries, but also addresses selected European Neighbourhood Policy countries. It assesses to which extent the lessons learned from past assistance and the new approach to PAR. Since PAR is one of three pillars of the new EU's Enlargement Strategy, this evaluation is expected to cover the role of the CS in PAR in IPA countries and the corresponding dialogue with the States. This evaluation has had to cope with significant delays and is now expected to deliver its (draft) evaluation report shortly. It is therefore not yet possible to comment on it ¹⁷ .

7.2.6.4 Evaluation questions

A detailed approach to qualitative enquiry with a selection of projects was prepared.

The evaluation team carefully considered the Evaluation Questions proposed in the Terms of Reference, prepared a revised set of questions for an initial reflection from DG NEAR and then did a further detailed analysis, including the development of an evaluation matrix. This analysis incorporated OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability, with additional criteria of added value, coherence, complementarity and consistency, and a specific focus on the cross-cutting areas of gender, human rights and the environment. As well as the evaluation questions themselves, related judgement criteria and indicators were established.

Qualitative enquiry incorporated a set of interview questions clearly aligned with the Evaluation Questions. An Interview *Guide* was prepared which contained the full set of interview questions. Different types of stakeholders (DG NEAR, EUDs, national/ local authorities, beneficiary representatives, etc.), were each addressed a different sub-set of these questions.

Finally, the Evaluation Matrix provided the overall analytic framework that the evaluation team used to address the questions of the evaluation. Specifically, the Evaluation Matrix provided detail on the *judgement criteria*, *judgement indicators* and *sources of information* for each of the Evaluation Questions.

¹⁷ It is noted that the evaluation team has drawn attention of this evaluation to the achievements of the multi-beneficiary project WEBER, funded under CSF, particularly in identification and formulation of indicators related to involvement of CSO in PAR and their dialogue with the Governments in that particular domain.

7.2.6.5 Consultation strategy

Overall, all consultations carried out by the evaluators took account of the European Commission's minimum standards for consultation.¹⁸ A particular focus has been on ensuring '*wide participation throughout the policy chain – from conception to implementation*'. In meeting the minimum standards:

- All communications were clear and concise, and included all necessary information to facilitate responses.
- All relevant parties have had an opportunity to express their opinions.
- Adequate awareness-raising through EUDs in each beneficiary country and through direct contact by the Evaluation Team, has ensured to the extent possible that all of the target audience was reached.
- Responses were to a structured set of questions.
- Adequate time was allotted for responses to be formulated.
- All contributions will be acknowledged and feedback provided where appropriate and summarised in the related reports.

7.2.6.5.1 Scope of stakeholders

Per the evaluation Terms of Reference, the beneficiaries of this evaluation are the European Commission and the beneficiaries of IPA assistance covered by it.

Specifically, per the Terms of Reference, the stakeholders for this evaluation include:

- Key stakeholders
 - Civil Society Organisations, networks, platforms, etc.
 - Local, grassroots organisations
 - Beneficiaries of sub-grants of the CSF
 - Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organisations (TACSO) and national Resource Centres for civil society development.
 - Local Advisory Groups (LAGs) established by TACSO in each of the Beneficiaries.
- National stakeholders
 - National IPA Coordinators (NIPAC).
 - SECO and other relevant bodies directly or indirectly involved in the programming and implementation of EU assistance and relevant reforms.
 - Government Offices in charge for Cooperation with CSOs and CS contact points in other Ministries;
 - Representatives of local governments.
 - Councils for the Civil Society Development (CCSD).
- EC stakeholders
 - DG NEAR Directorate D; Unit A.3: Thematic support, monitoring and Evaluation; Unit A.5: Turkey; CoTE on Civil Society support.
 - EU Delegations in beneficiary countries.
- International stakeholders
 - Other donors

7.2.6.5.2 Consultation process

Overall, the aims of the consultation process were threefold:

- To get stakeholders involved in the evaluation process and encourage them to be more proactive towards the aims of the evaluation.
- To use feedback from consultation processes to ensure the relevance of the evaluation process to stakeholders' needs.
- To improve the quality, credibility and utility of evaluation outputs through consultation with and engagement of stakeholders.

¹⁸ The general rules on how Commission services should consult are set out in the 2002 Commission Communication "Towards a reinforced culture of consultation and dialogue - General principles and minimum standards for consultation of interested parties by the Commission"; COM (2002) 704 final, complemented by COM (2012) 746 and accompanying SWD (2012) 422 and by COM (2014) 368.

Consultations with representatives of CSF stakeholders are the key element of the methodology. The full list of interviewees can be found at Annex 10.

7.2.6.6 Project reporting

Per the Evaluation Terms of Reference, the elaboration and approval of an inception report was required. An Inception Report was submitted, commented on by stakeholders, revised, commented on a second time, revised again and approved. Further reporting obligations include the evaluation report (this document), which is the main output of this evaluation. To this is added an *ad hoc* survey report (Survey Report)¹⁹, which the evaluation team proposed. This survey report was submitted on 30 June 2017.

Progress made during the evaluation, and any difficulties that arose, were discussed between the DG NEAR Task Manager and the evaluation Team Leader via phone and email, and face-to-face.

7.2.6.7 Quality control

The quality control of all outputs is carried out in compliance within specifications of the Terms of Reference and according to the well-established internal quality control procedures of the Contractor. The Team Leader supervised the complete evaluation process, as well as the individual outputs produced by separate evaluators. The Team Leader also acted as co-evaluator and coach for the Evaluation Team, ensuring a high quality of performance of all key evaluation tasks. The Team Leader has ensured that this evaluation report meets the required standards.

AETS has performed overall control and assured the quality of all written outputs produced, in accordance with the specific Terms of Reference for this contract.

¹⁹ 23 June 2017. Stakeholder Survey Report

7.3 Annex/ Appendix 3 – Evaluation Matrix Albania

7.3.1 Fieldwork Implementation

The field mission in Tirana on the “ Mid-term Evaluation of the Civil Society Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey ” took place during the period May 8 -12, 2017.

The field mission in Tirana was organized in close collaboration between evaluation team members and the European Union Delegation to Tirana.

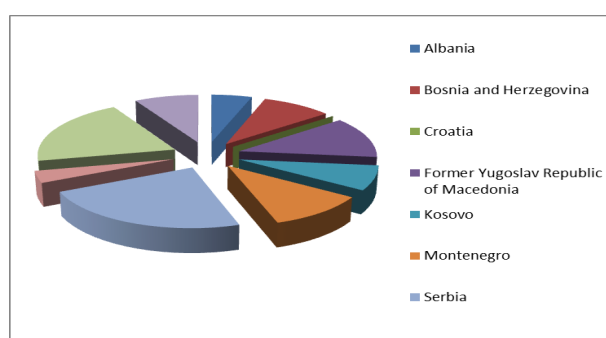
The team met and conducted interviews with all the stakeholders and representatives of: i) the European Delegation in Tirana; ii) the Ministry of European Integration, iii) the Prime Minister office, iv) civil society representatives, v) donors representatives, and vi) all the projects stakeholders involved with the implementation of the projects included in the project sample for Albania.

7.3.2 Albania Portfolio

The overall structure of the CSF portfolio 2011 – 2016 covered by the evaluation is shown below, as presented in the Inception Report (source: current CSF database).

Geographical Focus	Number of Contracts	Total EU Budget
Albania	19	EUR 6,087,544
BiH	33	EUR 12,912,470
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	45	EUR 9,911,482
Kosovo	27	EUR 8,544,842
Montenegro	39	EUR 6,688,387
Serbia	84	EUR 12,600,920
Turkey	13	EUR 11,058,604
WB and Turkey ²⁰	29	EUR 27,960,887
Multi-beneficiary ²¹	73	EUR 35,055,931
Total	362	EUR 130,821,066

The breakdown of projects shows a relatively high share of Serbia (84 projects), followed by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (45) and Montenegro (39) and a considerably smaller number of projects in Turkey (13). It has nevertheless to be noted that the average EU budget of the projects in Turkey is considerably higher the overall average. The multi-beneficiary (multi-country and WBT) projects represent a significant share of the total (103).



The CSF portfolio of national projects funded in Albania in the 2011 – 2016 period has had the following structure by theme (total and average budget figures in Euros):

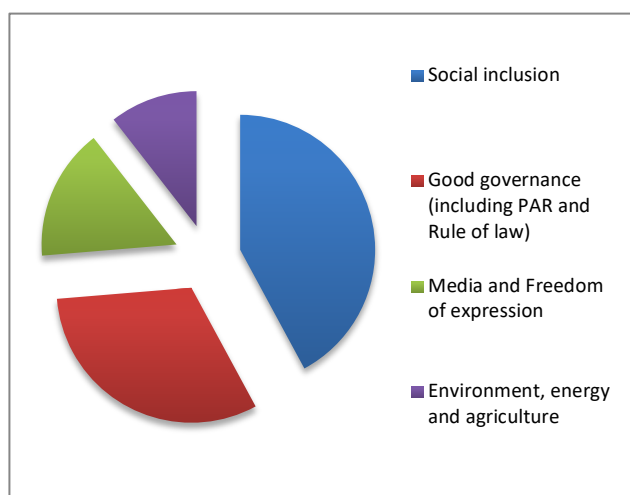
Breakdown of national project in Albania by theme	Number	Budget	Average
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²⁰ This description is for contracts/ projects which focus on ALL countries in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

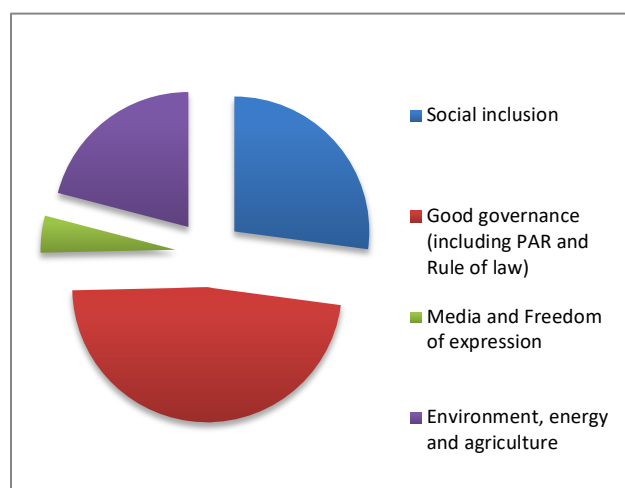
²¹ This description is for contracts/ projects which focus on more than one beneficiary country (but NOT all countries).

Civil Society development and local democracy	0	0	0
Social inclusion	8	1,650,419.68	206,302.46
Good governance (including PAR and Rule of law)	6	2,893,600.59	482,266.77
Media and Freedom of expression	3	269,039.27	89,679.76
Environment, energy and agriculture	2	1,274,484.00	637,242.00
TOTAL	19	6,087,543.54	320,397.03

Number of projects by theme



Total Budget by project theme



The national projects selected for the Albania sample are listed below; it is noted that all the projects in the sample for Albania national projects belong to the implementation instrument of action grants.

	Contract number	Title	Budget	Thematic focus
1	330583	"Bolstering the Role of Courts in Sustaining Freedom of Expression in Albania"	101,148.71	Media and freedom of expression
2	331531	Sustainable Multi-purpose Centre in Tirana Municipality Unit no.7	211,875.02	Social inclusion, anti discrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth
3	353791	'Achieve – Albanian Civil Society for a European Environment	725,592.00	Environment, climate action, energy and agriculture
4	370476	CIVILISC - Civil Society Instruments against Corruption	570,997.44	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)
		Average budget per project	402,403.29	
		320,397.03		

In addition, the evaluation in Albania also covered a multi-beneficiary Project Joint initiative to Empower Roma Civil Society on the Western Balkans and Turkey (Contract number 370300) managed by a CSO based in Albania.

7.3.3 Evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations in Albania

The evaluation findings presented in the country annexes are placed within the approved evaluation matrix and thus all follow the same sequence:

Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Relevance – programming level	EQ 1 – EQ 3
Relevance – project level	EQ 4 – EQ 5
Efficiency	EQ 6 – EQ 8
Effectiveness	EQ 9 – EQ 11
Impact	EQ 12 – EQ 14
Sustainability	EQ 15
Cross-cutting Issues – Gender and Human Rights	EQ 16
Cross-cutting issues - Environment	EQ 17
Coherence, coordination and consistency	EQ 18 – EQ 19
Added Value	EQ 20
Lessons Learnt	EQ 21

The findings are followed by a synthesis in form of conclusions and recommendations. It is underlined that the findings and conclusions solely refer to Albania and are not to be taken as general ones, on the level of CSF as a whole.

7.3.4 Responses to evaluation questions from the perspective of Albanian projects

Responses
Relevance – Programming Level
1. To what extent are the defined objectives of the CSF relevant?
<p><i>The CSF objectives for Albania are relevant, based on the CSF guidelines and the government roadmap for cooperation with the civil society. There is good alignment between the CSF objectives and the civil society needs. The CSF objectives especially those related to anti-corruption, good governance and the justice are linked with the Copenhagen political criteria for accession.</i></p> <p>The CSF document and spirit, follow the EU Guidelines in three relevant areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabling environment <p>Work on an enabling environment was largely initiated with support to establishment of the Roadmap for Civil Society (2014) with GoA, and the EC and GoA engaged in dialogue that informed processes at the political level when programming was coming online. There is forecast support to the establishment of the national council, the national agency for civil society, capacity building for GoA, support to the national council that was established in 2015. Registration processes are quite complex and difficult in relation to financial obligations. The other bottleneck is financial reporting, which is quite heavy. There is a need for legislative revision in terms of both registration and fiscal processes, and TACSO has provided recommendations and prepared guidelines for organisations to follow the processes. The government is engaged in this programme of the Enabling Environment with the intent of creating a national centre for civil society, with a resource centre as a part of this. This plan has not come to fruition as yet.</p> <p>When the Guidelines for Support to Civil Society were first presented they went through a series of serious consultations with civil society in all beneficiary countries. Many CSOs were brought together to provide comments. The Guidelines served as a framework for the development of guidelines for the GoA, with the preparation process developed in a participatory manner.</p> <p>The legal framework that defines how the delivery of social services can function in Albania has been updated lately and the secondary legislation is not completed yet. The CSOs have been providing at a large extend this function, using donor funds, the EU has assisted CSOs to deliver these services, and Albania is not at the stage where local government units can take over, or can provide support to civil society to provide these services. However, the EUD has slightly decreased its priority in this area since 2014 because the authorities are presumed to assume more responsibility in this regard, concentrating more on advocacy, and particularly in terms of legislation and policy (see below).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacities of CSOs in internal organisation and organisational capacity <p>EU support to civil society organisations has recently been framed in capacity, advocacy, networking. Every year or two there are Calls focused on strengthening the capacity of civil society, usually related to certain thematic areas. Funded CSOs note that they are undertaking their own assessments, and related training, so they are able to focus on both theme and related capacities. These noted assessments relate both to the thematic area and to the related capacity needs (training needs assessments). In terms of thematic needs, CSO work has shown areas of priority in relation to the implementation of legislation and policy, the media, human rights, governance and the rule of law.</p>

Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy dialogue support <p>The EUD has focused carefully on framing Calls for Proposals in such a way that CSOs are able to define objectives themselves, within a framework that gives indications on what possible actions will be supported. There is a strong focus on wording that allows organisations to pursue their own action plans, in the framework of CSF priorities. The key here, in terms of relevance, is balancing EU and CSO priorities and focus, and building a strong dialogue that improves outcomes for the EUD, CSOs and GoA. In the areas of policy dialogue, current CSF funding is directed a facilitating interaction and dialogue on reforms. This is a key priority of the EU in Albania - horizontal support for Civil Society: enabling environment, policy support, and the relationship between the two.</p> <p>According to the EU's Progress Report on Albania: 'Albania's legal and regulatory framework on the right of freedom of association is generally in line with international standards. However, the registration process at the First Instance Court in Tirana remained cumbersome due to the high financial cost of registration, lengthy procedures and lack of specialised judges dealing with CSOs' legal issues. In April, the law on volunteerism was enacted by parliament, fulfilling one of the nine priorities identified in the government road map towards a more enabling environment for civil society development.</p> <p>In November 2015, the parliament enacted the law on the establishment and functioning of the National Council for Civil Society (NCCS), with the aim of institutionalising cooperation</p> <p>Some progress was made towards implementing the institutional framework for consultation with civil society following the approval of the law establishing the National Council for Civil Society. The fiscal framework regulating the activity of civil society organisations (CSOs) was still not conducive to their development and needs to be revised.'</p>
<p>2. To what extent are objectives at different levels (strategic, MIPDs and programmes) clear, measurable and realistic?</p> <p>There is no systematic presence of intervention logic parameters and indicators. Objectives are not further elaborated, to render them measurable, including introduction of SMART indicators, which would enhance CSF monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Lack of SMART indicators makes monitoring and evaluation more difficult and does not allow for any benchmarking and assessments on results' achievement (performance as per the EU's Results Framework) of the Instrument as a whole and of the individual projects it has funded.</p>
<p>3. To what extent does programming take adequate and relevant account of assistance provided and reforms promoted by other (key) donors? (also pertinent to discussions of coordination/ complementarity)</p> <p>CSF programming takes account of assistance provided, and reforms promoted by other donors, but only to a certain extent. There are certain efforts made to facilitate information sharing between different donor programs. The existing mechanisms in place do not ensure complementarity at the programming phase of different donor programs. Currently there are some efforts in this area being made through the IPMG, and the sectorial working groups.</p> <p>There is a good process in Albania, since 2010, with a donor coordination working group that brings on board all foreign donor groups providing support to civil society. Coordination activities/ meetings take place 2-3 times per year, led by EUD and OSCE and with TACSO playing the role of Secretariat. These meetings include international partners/ donors that support civil society in the country and from time to time for specific discussions, government representatives (such as PM Office, Ministry of European Integration etc) are invited. There is an intention to improve the coordination and effectiveness of</p>

Responses
<p>this group by building up more systematic approaches, sharing of good practices and challenges and organisation of regular consultations with civil society organisations.</p> <p>Donors themselves note their own focus on EU Accession processes, with a view to complementarity and adding value, and a strongly-stated desire to avoid duplication. Donors also note the positive potential in IPMG processes, although these are only potentials at this stage and the authorities are encouraged to ensure that the CSO-s take part in all policy/ sector working group (IPMG).</p>
Relevance - Project Level
<p>4. To what extent has the use of the financial assistance to civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey been consistent with the objectives of the EU's support to civil society within the Enlargement Strategy?</p>
<p>The actions funded from the CSF in Albania are well-aligned with the Copenhagen political criteria for accession.</p> <p>The CSF has been focused on the EU political agenda, and important issues are being covered by the CSF and the projects it funds, including anti-corruption, access to justice, good governance, organized crime. human rights, environment. There are a number of systems and processes in place that ensure links between the objectives of the EU's support to civil society and civil society itself. These processes (consultations, negotiations, conferences, discussions) assist in informing, and in determining directions and priorities. As a result, there tends to be a significant correlation between the objectives of EU support and the activities and results of funded projects.</p>
<p>5. To what extent does the financial assistance respond to the specific needs of civil society in the targeted sectors?</p>
<p>The CSF financial assistance respond to the specific needs of civil society in the sectors of human rights, in addition the priorities to increase and strengthen the civil society capacities are reflected in the objectives of funded projects.</p> <p>The shift in recent years, in the EUD and with Calls, has been towards the impact of civil society needs and priorities on the content and structure of Calls. There has been an intentional move away from EU-driven content of Calls. As noted above, the EUD has focused carefully on framing Calls for Proposals in such a way that CSOs are able to define objectives themselves, within a framework that gives indications on what possible actions will be supported. There is a strong focus on wording that allows organisations to pursue their own action plans, in the framework of CSF priorities.</p> <p>Specifically funded initiative, and particularly the grant programmes providing sub-grants to grassroots organisations, are also strongly focused on the defined needs and priorities of CSOs. Specifically funded initiatives, and particularly the grant programmes providing sub-grants to grassroots organisations, are also strongly focused on the defined needs, priorities and outreach work of CSOs across Albania. As is seen in detail below (Question 6), focus of these initiatives is on grantee agendas, together with the building of grantee capacity. As is seen in detail below (Question 6), focus of these initiatives is on grantee agendas, together with the building of grantee capacity.</p> <p>The TACSO project is notable for its 'two-way' assistance, up from CSOs to the EUD and down from the EUD to CSOs. The EUD understands the context and its learning's, and it retains as a key priority the CSO-s capacity-building.</p> <p>Two current areas of concern are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The over-emphasis on sub-granting that is having an effect on medium-sized CSOs, as they are unable or unwilling to manage a grant programme and cannot find themselves as sub-grantees to a CSO-managed grant project.

Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future directions for the TACSO project, with uncertainty that its coordination and learning capacities will be as effective going forward.
Efficiency
6. To what extent has the provided financial assistance reached grassroots and community-based organisations?
<p>The CSF financial assistance has increased its reach of grassroots and community-based organisations in Albania, however the programme coverage is not balanced as per the type, size, and profile of supported organisations. Over the last years there has been more focus on the grassroots organisations, providing less opportunities for middle-size CSOs.</p> <p>Historically, the starting point of the CSF was to bring more flexibility, but over time rules became stricter and stricter. More recently though, more scope has developed for flexibility, particularly in terms of instruments. In the Albania context, a particular focus has been on sub-granting, in order to provide greater reach to grassroots and community-based organisations. These sub-granting approaches have been overseen by larger, more professional organisations such as the REC in Albania and the Institute for Democracy and Mediation. While not the only examples, these organisations demonstrate the quality and variety of approaches being implemented. Some key points of approach are noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A focus on what grantees want to do with the funding, not what the contracting organisation wants to do – their own agenda. • Concrete activities – a connection to the community. • A focus on collaboration between CSOs. • A focus on what grantee organisations ‘leave in the ground’, i.e., results of implementation. <p>Granting organisations note a need to be strict in their sub-granting processes, not because they see the need with grantees, but to protect themselves in their financial obligation within the strict EU rules.</p> <p>The EUD has introduced a new approach on a better linking CSF projects with the Sector approach. An effective strategy the EUD is implementing to link civil society within the sector approach, is transferring of the responsibility for CSF projects in a specific sector to the Task Manager responsible for this sector. The EUD sees the importance of having all parts of its work together, improving coordination and focus.</p> <p>The EUD is planning, in the coming period, to introduce a new modality to facilitate contracted organisations to provide grants at the grassroots level. The new modality may include the presentation of project proposals based on CSO priorities which are not definitely based on the CFP. The intent of this approach is the support of ‘actions’, as opposed to ‘projects’.</p> <p>From the perspective of civil society, the trends in the focus of the CSF are seen as positive. Specifically noted are a widening of focus in theme and instrument (although it is also noted that the focus of instruments is narrowing), with a larger number of NGOs being able to access funding, and with allowance for more core-type funding. Having said this, there is concern about the narrowing possibilities for middle-sized CSOs to access funding, as noted above.</p>
7. To what extent has DG NEAR used an appropriate mix of funding instruments to reach the stated objectives of CSF support?

Responses
<p>The CSF assistance in Albania is mixed to a certain extent, with regard to the thematic focus of grants, and the size and types of funded organisations. The CSF portfolio is not diverse in terms of instruments available; over the last year there has been a major focus on sub-grant schemes.</p> <p>As is discussed elsewhere in this document, the instruments available to the CSF in Albania are mixed, and provide a wide range of possible solutions, but the current focus of Calls for Proposals is heavily focused on grassroots and community-based organisations and the sub-grant schemes that are designed to provide funding at this level. This practice is showing that experienced organisations are partnering with newly established and grassroots organisations and are moving out of traditional geographical areas and in to areas not address before.</p> <p>This current emphasis has absolutely improved the reach of CSF funding in Albania, but it appears to be doing so while blocking the engagement of some CSOs who find it difficult to apply for a smaller, sub-grant, and who are of the belief that they <i>could</i> administer a grant programme, but they do not want to do so as it would have a direct, and negative impact on their current focus and mission. A further area of needed discussion is core support for organisations, particularly organisations with institutional strengths/ capacities that can then be used in structural ways to support ongoing developments.</p>
<p>8. To what extent is the provided financial assistance flexible enough to respond to changing needs?</p> <p>CSF assistance is, to a large extent, more flexible, and has responded to the expressed needs of civil society in becoming more flexible, with longer-term aid modalities based on these expressed needs. However, CSOs still face challenges to comply with CSF requirements especially those related to financial reporting and language.</p> <p>As is noted elsewhere in this document, the EUD in Albania, and the CSF as a whole, have had a focus on developing flexibility of instrument and of theme, and have worked also on flexibility in administrative and financial requirements to the extent allowed by EU rules and the determinations of relevant Finance Departments. There is a greater degree of flexibility in the CSF than in earlier years. However, there are a number of areas in which EUD/ CSF administrative processes impact in negative ways on CSOs and their projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small, community-based, grassroots organisations often simply cannot comply with requirements for being grant recipients, or are unwilling to turn the focus of their energy away from their activities in order to meet administrative requirements. • Sub-granting schemes, run by CSOs, address this issue but potentially at the expense of the ‘mission’ of the contracting CSO, whose focus is often overtaken by meeting EU requirements (and ensuring grantee organisations do the same). • The situation with VAT exemptions remains unresolved for sub-grantee organisations. • The lengthy period from the beginning of consultations with CSOs as to the content and focus of a Call, through to the actual Call being issued, to assessment of proposals, to contracting and finally to implementation. The fact is that the delays in this process can often mean that proposals as submitted are not necessarily still relevant when a grant contract is signed, but there is no system in place for proposals to be varied/ updated to address changes in context. • The requirement that the language of application does not include the local language is an important element that hampers CSOs in applying for a grant.
Effectiveness

Responses
<p>9. To what extent is the financial assistance contributing to addressing the needs and priorities of the civil society sector? (Focus on civil society.)</p> <p>CSF assistance in Albania has addressed civil society needs with regard to a more enabling environment for CSOs, and more access to EU funds for grassroots organisations. However, more emphasis is required on involving civil society in a more structured and engaging policy dialogue.</p> <p>In terms of CSOs themselves, the EUD has been diligent in its attempts to formulate approaches (thematic and in terms of instruments) that will be responsive to civil society's stated needs, and is consistent in implementing innovative and responsive approaches, such as the sub-granting and 'financial support' instruments discussed above. An underlying focus is capacity-building, so that funded organisations, and civil society itself, has better knowledge, skills and experience to address its priorities for the development of Albania. In all of these areas, and in improving its geographic coverage, the CSF is being effective in Albania.</p> <p>A critical issue for the effectiveness of the CSF, and for Albania generally, is that while the structure of the enabling environment is in place, the reality is much less visible. As discussed above, there is forecast support for the establishment of the national council, the national agency for civil society, capacity building for GoA, and support to the national council, and the government has engaged in the programme of the Enabling Environment with the intent of creating a national centre for civil society, with a resource centre as a part of this. However, this plan has not come to fruition as yet. The effectiveness of the CSF is linked, to a large extent, to the success of building the enabling environment, and in an environment that is increasingly polarised, this process is more difficult to achieve.</p> <p>A related area of concern is the coming form and functioning of TACSO and its resource centre. On the one hand, continuing to provide a regional perspective to development and capacity-building and on the other hand to provide a relevant resource to local needs.</p>
<p>10. To what extent is the financial assistance contributing to achievement of CSF's stated strategic objectives and priorities? (Focus on the CSF itself.)</p> <p>CSF assistance has contributed to reaching a number of stated objectives in the areas of anti-corruption, justice, and human rights and there are cases in which the interaction between beneficiary CSOs and government/ public authorities has been improved. However, CSOs in Albania still lack a resource centre and human and institutional capacities of CSOs remain low.</p> <p>CSOs are engaged in the preparation of policy briefs, and policy documents, and are advocating on behalf of this work, with government. They are engaged locally, and at the national level. There is visible lobbying/ advocacy.</p> <p>CSOs at all levels are building capacity, notably in advocacy approaches, but also in terms of their own administration and management.</p> <p>The single biggest challenge to the CSF, in meeting its objectives, is in addressing the implementation of the enabling environment – to turn form into substance. This is particularly true of the fiscal framework.</p>
<p>11. To what extent are the different implementation instruments effective in providing support to civil society?</p> <p>The CSF portfolio in Albania is not diverse in terms of instruments types and thematic focus. Over recent Calls for Proposals, sub-granting has been introduced as a new, and focus instrument. The engagement of CSOs in different types of instruments is very low, as is their knowledge of other types of instruments. Consideration of a wider range of instrument usage can, potentially, improve effectiveness and reach.</p>

Responses
<p>The EUD has, in recent Calls, had a clear and intentional focus on sub-granting instruments. This approach has been innovative, on the part of contracted organisations, and is being effective in ensuring that CSF funds reach more deeply into civil society and also achieve a wider geographical spread. As well as this reach, it is clear that these sub-granting approaches are being effective in growing the capacity of the sub-grantees, and in enabling them to become more effective in their outreach. As many of these organisations are community-based, grassroots organisations, this means there is a greater apparent effectiveness in municipalities, and with the wider population.</p> <p>However, this strong emphasis on sub-granting has detracted from a balanced usage of instruments, and has caused difficulties for a range of CSOs, as they have not been able to apply for funding, either to run a grant scheme or to participate in a grant scheme as a sub-grantee. The three, large granting organisations benefit, as do the small, grassroots ones, but a wide grouping of medium-sized organisations are missing the opportunity to apply for, and win, grants.</p> <p>One issue raised in field enquiry, but not to the extent of being called a 'finding', is funding to large, international CSOs, and whether or not this funding actually contributes to achieving the objectives and addressing the priorities of the CSF in Albania. Do grants to these organisations actually address the enabling environment, build CSO capacity and advocacy and contribute to policy dialogue?</p>
Impact
12. What have been the impacts of the CSF to date?
<p>The CSF impact to date is that it has contributed to the creation of a more enabling environment for CSOs.</p> <p>The CSF has increased the number of grassroots organisations benefiting from CSF funding, has increased the human and institutional capacities of these CSOs, has increased the participation, and the <i>contribution</i>, of CSOs related to public policies in the areas of anti-corruption, good-governance, justice and judicial reform, the environment, and social service delivery. As discussed above, change in this area also includes legislative measures, as well as the range of mechanisms dedicated to assistance to civil society (but that are not, to date, fully functional).</p> <p>Impacts are also noticeable in terms of the deeper, and wider, reach of CSF funding, as discussed above. Impacts here may better be called potential impacts, as sustainable change through these initiatives is not yet certain. What is certain is that the organisations being reached are improving their capacity, and the whole instrument of approach generates a better leverage for change.</p> <p>The TACSO initiative has had impact, in the two specific areas in which it dedicated its focus: application for funds and management of funds. Organisations have improved their knowledge, skills and experience in these two areas.</p> <p>From the perspective of CSOs, impact, or being clearly on the road to impact, in terms of thematic areas, is visible in judicial reform, anti-corruption and some early directions with public sector administration reform, although external, political factors have a negative influence in this reform.</p>
13. Are regional networks funded through the CSF effectively advocating for policy reforms in the Western Balkans and Turkey?
All discussions about regional networks are found in the Multi-beneficiary and Regional Project Evaluation Matrix, which can be found at Annex/ Appendix 9.
14. What factors are there, which contribute to or hamper impact?

Responses
<p>The factors that have hampered the CSF impact are related to the duration of CSF-funded actions, low institutional capacity, low human capacities within grassroots CSOs, and a lack of continuous financial support for CSOs.</p> <p>Project timeframes have increased, and this is important – longer timeframes, to a point, are important for impact.</p> <p>Growing capacity in CSOs remains a critical component of the CSF, and the work associated with this with grassroots organisations is a particular priority. This is a notable priority for CSOs dealing with disadvantaged groups such as the disabled, Roma and women.</p> <p>An absence of economic sustainability hampers impact, and when an action ends, impacts immediately dissipate.</p> <p>Inadequately developed human resources in funded CSOs are also an inhibiting factor.</p>
Sustainability
<p>15. To what extent are the impacts noted to date sustainable and likely to continue producing effects after the end of CSF assistance?</p> <p>The sustainability of CSF actions in Albania is fragile, and many of the actions financed by the CSF face difficulties in continuing to produce effects after project closure. An increase in human and institutional capacities of CSOs, as well as some aspects of legislative changes, are among CSF actions that show a stronger sustainability potential.</p> <p>The most important sustainability aspects for organisations are visible in their own processes, including the ability of organisations to plan well and to manage well. This change has occurred as a result of training they have received, such as that provided through TACSO, and more directly in their ongoing interactions with and learning from their more experienced partners. Much change in practice has come specifically from what has been learned through sharing with partners and the granting organisation in the case of sub-grantees. Organisations also point to improvements in management capacity and processes. Fundamentally, organisations are better equipped with knowledge and skills.</p> <p>There is an increase in organisational visibility due to their participation in CSF-funded projects, which is noted particularly with smaller, grassroots organisations that have received a sub-grant for local activities. Actions focused on changes to legislation, and those focused on vulnerable groups, are more likely to be sustainable in the long run.</p> <p>On the other hand, the limited availability of funding impacts on any and all organisations, as they must always struggle for support. This is particularly difficult if they 'cannot find themselves' in a Call. Further, with no national systems of funding, and a shrinking donor community, availability of resources is decreasing.</p>
Cross-cutting Issues (gender and human rights)
<p>16. Is there a sufficient and effective focus in CSF funding on human rights and gender equality?</p> <p>There is sufficient focus on gender and human rights in the CSF in Albania.</p> <p>Human rights is cross-cutting, horizontal - this is the correct focus. The CSF has an appropriate focus on human rights in its Calls and its priorities - for more sensitive issues organisations look to the EIDHR. Organisations generally have some consideration of gender in their proposals, but it is not necessarily a real focus of design or implementation.</p>
Environment

Responses
<p>17. Is there a sufficient and effective focus in CSF guidelines on the environment?</p> <p>There is sufficient focus on environment in the CSF in Albania.</p> <p>There are a number of environment focused CSF-funded projects in Albania, and the environment is a visible priority in Calls.</p>
<p>Coherence, Coordination and Consistency</p>
<p>18. To what extent are the different national and regional actions of the CSF programme coherent/ complementing/ overlapping?</p> <p>CSF actions in Albania are complementary with other EU actions in the specific sector of support, however CSF coherence and complementary is expected to gain momentum with the functioning of the IPMG structures. More effort is needed to ensure the complementarity of, and to avoid overlapping with other donor programs during the planning phase of the CSF actions.</p> <p>There is one area of coherence in which the EUD in Albania provides regional, CSF leadership – the previously mentioned linking of CSF project oversight to the relevant Task Manager for each given sector. Within the EUD this provides for excellent coherence within the sector, improving coordination and strategic frameworks, and there is a lot of effort within the EUD to ensure complementarity and synergy between different actions. What is not so visible is an effective sharing of lessons learned, approaches and strategic thinking from the EUD in Albania to other EUDs in the region – and vice versa.</p> <p>GoA too is following the sector approach for coordination through IPMGs (Integrated Policy Management Group). There is a strong push for civil society to sit on each thematic group and each IPMG, and there is a specific IPMG for policy dialogue, which is responsible for the enabling environment. In this context, the framework for coherence is clear, and visible – a dedicated bridge between government and civil society. Implementation of these directions remains weak.</p>
<p>19. To what extent do supported projects ensure fulfilment of the visibility strategy set by the European Commission?</p> <p>CSF projects ensure, only to a certain extent, the visibility requirements for Albania.</p> <p>EU visibility requirements are well-understood by larger CSOs – they have developed organisational strategies, names and visibility approaches that are effective and well known. This is not so much the case with smaller organisations, who have neither the experience or the need to develop a public profile. In all of this, the EU, as donor, is only somewhat well-known, which is of some concern. While there are visibility guidelines, they are somewhat old and under revision. It is not clear that the Albanian public knows what activities are being undertaken, who is undertaking them and who is providing the funding. Nor is it clear if the Albanian public is completely clear about the agenda and role of the EU in the region and in Albania specifically.</p> <p>Greater development of communication plans/ visibility strategies for grantees, whether contracted organisations or sub-grantees.</p>
<p>Added Value</p>
<p>20. What value is added to the work and initiatives of beneficiary countries compared to that which might be achieved without the contributions of the CSF?</p> <p>CSF support has provided more funding opportunities for grassroots organisations, capacities of CSOs have been increased, and citizens and CSOs participate more actively in policy-making and decision-making processes.</p>

7.3.5 Lessons Learned

In Albania, CSF effectiveness benefits from a close linking between CSF-funded initiatives and sectoral responsibilities within an EUD. Moreover, the sub-granting schemes have contributed to strengthening civil society by producing professional products, not simply by financially supporting CSO.

7.3.6 Conclusions

Relevance

The CSF is a relevant instrument in support to the civil society in Albania. CSF objectives are linked with the Copenhagen political criteria for accession and there is good alignment between the CSF objectives and the civil society needs. CSF programming takes account of assistance provided, and reforms promoted by other donors, however the existing mechanisms in place do not ensure complementarity at the programming phase of different donor programs. Currently there are some efforts in this area being made through the IPMG, and the sectorial working groups that needs to be encouraged. The CSF objectives are clear and realistic, however there are no clear indicators which would make it possible to measure progress toward outcomes.

Efficiency

CSF financial assistance has increased its reach of grassroots and community-based organisations in Albania, however the programme coverage is not balanced as per the type, size, thematic focus of grants, and profile and size of supported organisations. Over the last years there has been more focus on the grassroots organisations, providing less opportunities for middle-size CSOs. The CSF portfolio is not diverse in terms of instruments available, with a major focus on sub-granting schemes. CSF assistance is, to a large extent, more flexible, and has responded to the expressed needs of civil society in becoming more flexible, with longer-term aid modalities based on these expressed needs. However, CSOs still face challenges to comply with CSF requirements, especially those related to financial reporting and language.

Effectiveness

CSF assistance in Albania has addressed civil society needs with regard to developing a more enabling environment for CSOs, and more access to EU funds for grassroots organisations, although the implementation of the enabling environment has not been a Government strength. CSF assistance has contributed to reaching a number of stated objectives in the areas of anti-corruption, justice, and human rights and there are cases in which the interaction between beneficiary CSOs and government/ public authorities has improved.

Impact

The CSF has increased the number of grassroots organisations benefiting from CSF funding, has increased the human and institutional capacities of these CSOs, has increased the participation, and the *contribution*, of CSOs related to public policies in the areas of anti-corruption, good-governance, justice and

judicial reform, environment, human rights (children and Roma community rights) social service delivery, where CSF impact is more visible. The CSF impact is hampered by some important factors such as the duration of CSF-funded actions, low institutional capacity, low human capacities within grassroots CSOs, and a lack of continuous financial support for CSOs.

Sustainability

The sustainability of CSF actions in Albania is fragile, and many of the actions financed by the CSF face difficulties in continuing to produce effects after project closure. An increase in human and institutional capacities of CSOs, as well as some aspects of legislative changes, are among CSF actions that show a stronger sustainability potential, but due to the lack of more systematic and transparent mechanisms for funding of CSOs and, with no national systems of funding, and a shrinking of donor community funding, availability of resources is decreasing the overall sustainability of CSO support.

Cross-cutting areas

The focus on human rights and environment in Albania is sufficient.

Coherence

CSF actions in Albania are complementary with other EU actions in the specific sector of support, and CSF coherence and complementary is expected to gain momentum with the functioning of the IPMG structures. More effort is needed to ensure the complementarity of, and to avoid overlapping with other donor programs during the planning phase of CSF actions. There is one area of coherence in which the EUD in Albania provides regional, CSF leadership – the linking of CSF project oversight to the relevant Task Manager for each given sector. Within the EUD this provides for excellent coherence within the sector, improving coordination and strategic frameworks, and there is a particular focus within the EUD to ensure complementarity and synergy between different actions.

Visibility

CSF projects ensure, only to a certain extent, the visibility requirements for Albania. EU visibility requirements are well-understood by larger CSOs – they have developed organisational strategies, names and visibility approaches that are effective and well known. CSF support to CSOs is only somewhat well-known, which is of some concern. It is not clear that the Albanian public knows what activities are being undertaken, who is undertaking them and who is providing the funding.

7.3.7 Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the EUD, in future planning for the CSF, focus on diversity, and particular to giving consideration to the use of different instruments (action grants, operating grants, framework partnership agreement and Technical Assistance);

2. It is recommended that the EUD improve CSF planning, through a more specific focus on the size, duration, and thematic approach of grants, and on the size of supported CSOs. The CSF would benefit from creating more funding opportunities for middle-sized CSOs, while continuing its support to grassroots organisations.
3. It is recommended that the EUD give consideration to the use of local language in all CSF application processes.
4. It is recommended that the EUD, together with DG NEAR, improve monitoring and evaluation of the CSF through the introduction of SMART indicators at all levels of results. Further, it is recommended that the EUD initiate project evaluations, particularly where projects are larger, and/ or longer.
5. It is recommended that the EUD, together with other EUDs in the region, and DG NEAR, introduce a revised approach to developing effective visibility approaches for supported actions. Some planning for these visibility processes will need to take place at the regional level (to be then implemented by funded organisations), and some will be the direct responsibility of funded organisations.
6. It is recommended that the EUD consider more support for those CSOs operating within the thematic sectors of good governance/ transparency, in increasing the watchdog and advocacy role of the CSOs.

7.4 Annex/ Appendix 4 – Evaluation Matrix Bosnia and Herzegovina

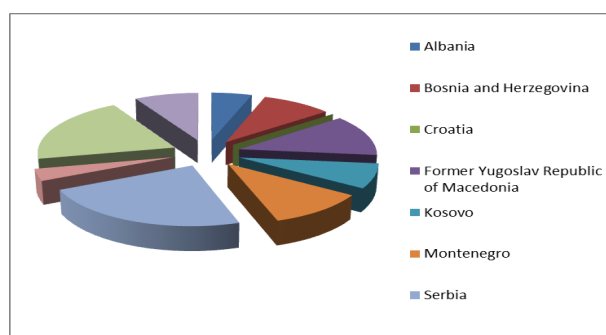
7.4.1 Fieldwork Implementation and Bosnia and Herzegovina Portfolio

The evaluation fieldwork in Bosnia and Herzegovina was implemented in two missions, one from 5 – 12 April and one from 26 – 27 April by two evaluation team members, and covered all the projects listed in the Bosnia and Herzegovina sample. It also comprised briefing and debriefing meetings with the EUD, and several meetings with both the Government and CS actors.

The overall structure of the total CSF portfolio 2011 – 2016 covered by the evaluation is shown below, as presented in the Inception Report (source: current CSF database).

Geographical Focus	Number of Contracts	Total EU Budget
Albania	19	EUR 6,087,544
BiH	33	EUR 12,912,470
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	45	EUR 9,911,482
Kosovo	27	EUR 8,544,842
Montenegro	39	EUR 6,688,387
Serbia	84	EUR 12,600,920
Turkey	13	EUR 11,058,604
WB and Turkey ²²	29	EUR 27,960,887
Multi-beneficiary ²³	73	EUR 35,055,931
Total	362	EUR 130,821,066

The breakdown of projects shows a relatively high share of Serbia (84 projects), followed by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (45) and Montenegro (39), Bosnia and Herzegovina (33) and a considerably smaller number of projects in Turkey (13). It has nevertheless to be noted that the average EU budget of the projects in Turkey is considerably higher the overall average. The multi-beneficiary (multi-country and WBT) projects represent a significant share of the total (103).



The CSF portfolio of national projects funded in BiH in the 2011 – 2016 period has had the following structure by theme (total and average budget figures in Euros):

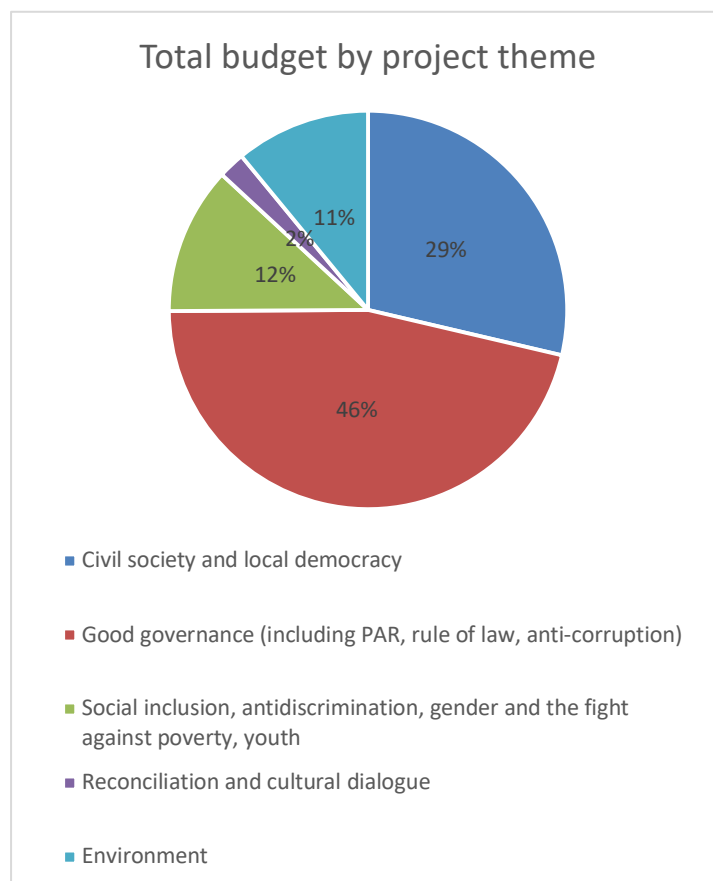
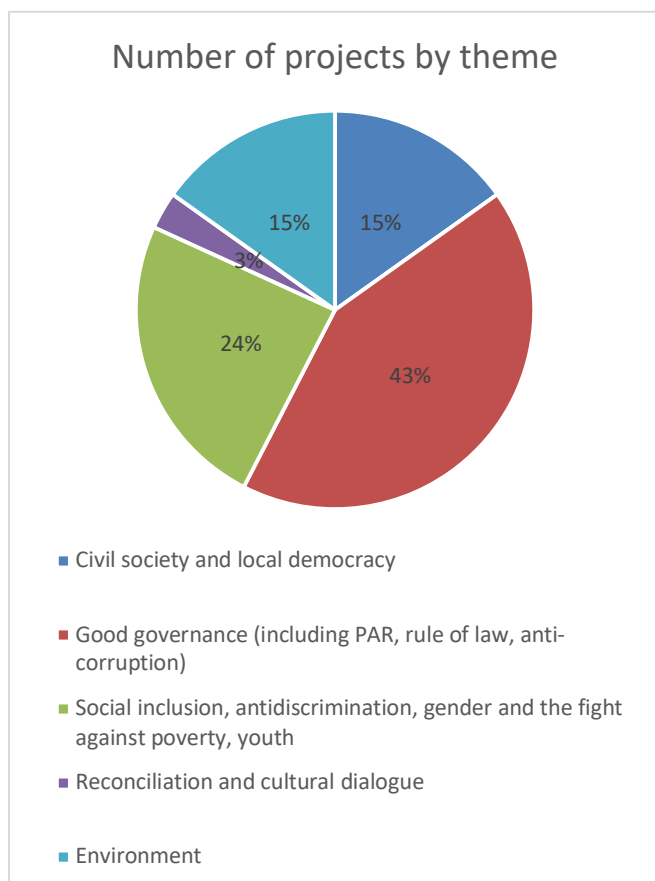
Theme	No. of projects	Total budget	Average
Civil society and local democracy	5	3,832,774.77	766,554.95
Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	14	6,185,226.81	441,801.92
Social inclusion, antidiscrimination,	8	1,601,909.76	200,238.72

²² This description is for contracts/ projects which focus on ALL countries in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

²³ This description is for contracts/ projects which focus on more than one beneficiary country (but NOT all countries).

Theme	No. of projects	Total budget	Average
gender and the fight against poverty, youth			
Reconciliation and cultural dialogue	1	288,482.43	288,482.43
Environment	5	1,465,220.63	293,044.13
Total	33	13,373,614.40	

This structure is illustrated in the charts below:



The national projects selected for the Bosnia and Herzegovina sample are listed below; it is noted that all the projects in the sample belong to the implementation instrument of action grants, except for the technical assistance project and project implemented by UNDP.

Bosnia and Herzegovina Sample of Projects

	Title	Nature	Amount (EUR)	Theme
1.	Environment Friendly Energy Coalition Team	Action Grants/ Open call	231.420,63	Environment, climate action, energy and agriculture
2.	Monitoring of implementation of youth policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina	Action Grants/ Open call	241.700,00	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth
3.	Voice of Children	Action Grants/ Open call	223.950,00	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth
4.	BASE - Building Accountability and	Action Grants/ Open call	1.500.000,00	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)

	Title	Nature	Amount (EUR)	Theme
	Systems in the Elections			
5.	Integrity through Justice: Independent civil society monitoring and assessment of judicial response to corruption	Action Grants / Restricted call	189.000,00	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)
6.	Reinforcement of Local Democracy	ME-Implementation	2.000.000,00	Civil society development and local democracy
7.	Capacity building of government institutions to engage in a policy dialogue with civil society	Implementation / AOR - (FR2007) Restricted Call for Tender - External Actions	964.998,53	Civil society development and local democracy
Average budget per project: 764,438.45			5,351,069.16	

Evaluation sample of national projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina represents 21,2% of the total number of national projects funded under CSF in the 2011-2016 period, Out of seven (7) national projects in the sample, two (2) projects belong to the field of Good Governance (14,2%), two (2) to the field of social inclusion (25%), two (2) to the civil society development (40%) and one (1) for environment (20%).

In addition, the evaluation in Bosnia and Herzegovina also covered a multi-beneficiary Project (South East Europe Sustainable Energy Policy or SEE SEP), managed by SEE Change Net Foundation - BiH.

7.4.2 Evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The evaluation findings presented in the country annexes are placed within the approved evaluation matrix and thus all follow the same sequence:

Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Relevance – programming level	EQ 1 – EQ 3
Relevance – project level	EQ 4 – EQ 5
Efficiency	EQ 6 – EQ 8
Effectiveness	EQ 9 – EQ 11
Impact	EQ 12 – EQ 14
Sustainability	EQ 15
Cross-cutting Issues – Gender and Human Rights	EQ 16
Cross-cutting issues - Environment	EQ 17
Coherence, coordination and consistency	EQ 18 – EQ 19
Added Value	EQ 20
Lessons Learnt	EQ 21

The findings are followed by a synthesis in form of conclusions and recommendations. It is underlined that the findings and conclusions solely refer to Bosnia and Herzegovina and are not to be taken as general ones, on the level of CSF as a whole.

7.4.3 Responses to evaluation questions from the perspective of BiH projects

Responses
Relevance – Programming Level
1. To what extent are the defined objectives of the CSF relevant?
<p>CSF objectives for Bosnia and Herzegovina are relevant, based on the CSF guidelines and the recognised needs of civil society in the country, particularly taking into account the lack of a government strategy for civil society. CSF objectives are strongly linked with outcomes identified under the overall CSF objective; and support to CSOs in areas such as environment and climate change, fight against corruption, awareness building in the area of justice and security, and culture etc. in order to meet the second outcome.</p> <p>Generally, CSF objectives and the priorities of consecutive CfPs show strong alignment with the Copenhagen Political criteria for accession, particularly preservation of democratic governance and human rights. Civil society empowerment is integral part of the political criteria for the EU accession process, especially the role of the government to successfully perform and establish the conducive environment for the sustainable development of civil society.</p> <p>The CSF document and spirit, follow the EU Guidelines in two relevant areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling environment <p>Within the period of over twenty years after the war, Bosnia and Herzegovina has seen many initiatives and efforts towards improvement of the enabling environment for cooperation between the state and civil society. However, the EU Progress report for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015 stated: “No progress was made in improving mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation between government and civil society organisations. The legal and financial framework needs to be further improved.”²⁴ The 2016 EU Progress report marked some progress “in establishing institutional mechanisms for cooperation between governments and civil society organisations (CSOs), a strategic framework for cooperation with civil society needs to be developed.”²⁵ Reports also raise attention to the lack of transparent public funding following clearly defined criteria. With regards to public consultation at state level, the Council of Ministers of BiH adopted the Rules of Consultations in Legislative Drafting at its 128th session, held on September 7, 2006²⁶, as a means for enabling more transparent consultation process, including civil society. However, the Rules are not fully implemented to date. Within efforts for more inclusion of civil society, the Agreement on</p>

²⁴ European Commission (2015); EU Progress Report: Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015; p. 8

²⁵ European Commission (2015); EU Progress Report: Bosnia and Herzegovina 2016

²⁶ Published in „Official Gazette of BiH“, no. 81/06

Responses

Cooperation between the Council of Ministers of BH (BH CoM) and the Non-Governmental Sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina was signed in 2007²⁹, but its implementation is not happening as expected.

A key area is the focus on capacity building of government institutions and civil society to engage in a dialogue in order to meet the first outcome of the CSF. Technical assistance²⁷ is continuously provided for capacity building to the State, entities and Brčko District of BiH governments in development of institutional mechanisms for cooperation with civil society, in order to enable the aforementioned governments to engage in a more fruitful dialogue with civil society. TA also enables the governments to better understand citizen needs and engage civil society better in different reform processes.²⁸ The CSF also supported cooperation between municipal governments and civil society, and building awareness of the mutual benefits of cooperation, encouraging sustainable dialogue, and building capacity necessary for interaction. Also, development of unified and transparent mechanisms for disbursing municipal funds, foreseen for CSO project-based activities in accordance with local service needs and identified priorities, was supported through the LOD Project implemented by UNDP.

- **Capacities of CSOs in internal organisation and organisational capacity**

According to the records there are 22,601 registered associations and foundations in Bosnia and Herzegovina²⁹. The share of activities of civil society organizations in the total GDP in BiH, as per the Mapping Study of CSOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, show that the participation of CSOs in the BiH GDP in 2014 amounted to 0.68 %³⁰. As per available data from 2009, the highest percentage of surveyed associations is in the field of sport (18.45% of the total), followed by membership, mutual benefit associations (12%). Associations dealing with women's protection make up 7.3%; those dealing with environmental protection make 4.29%; and human rights associations make 2.58% of the overall number of surveyed associations.³¹ Online register of CSOs has been established at the Ministry of Justice with help of CBGI project. The register for the moment includes CSOs established at state and FBiH level, with RS still pending³².

CSOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina struggle with weak capacities in both management and political dialogue with government and other sectors of society. This can partially be attributed to the natural diffuse status of organisations with fluctuations in staffing levels, funding opportunities and overall motivation to be engaged in such a form of organisation. In line with this, the recent Needs Assessment of Civil Society conducted by the TACSO Project has shown that CSOs struggle with overall administrative and financial management structures, particularly those CSOs active at local levels. Another relevant weakness is the overall financial management and lack of monitoring and evaluation systems within and for organisations.

Organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina focus their attention, inter alia, on their watchdog function, and also participate in decision-making processes at various government levels, with greater or lesser rates of success. A large proportion of organisations do not feel empowered to take a more active role as

²⁷ Technical assistance project CBGI, contract no. 2012/1307-716 was included in the sample of this evaluation

²⁸ Published in „Official Gazette of BiH“, no. 81/06

²⁹ http://europa.ba/?page_id=676

³⁰ EPRD (2017); Mapping Study of CSOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina; <http://europa.ba/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Mapping-study-of-CSOs-in-BiH.pdf>

³¹ HTSPE&Kronauer Consulting, Civil Society in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, 2009.

³² Register is available at http://www.mpr.gov.ba/organizacija_nadleznosti/uprava/registracije/default.aspx?id=2647&langTag=bs-BA

Responses
<p>there is a consistent lacking of funds and related fluctuations of staffing levels; a lack of capacities and knowledge on how to adequately participate and contribute to policy making; a lack of connection to the ongoing, higher levels of advocacy by networks and stronger organisations.</p> <p>As per the TACSO study³³, Bosnian CSOs are engaged in networks. The most common form of organising is advocacy networking, which makes up 47% of total network interventions, followed by sector networking (41%) and service provider networks (12%). The research also identified that networks (73%) are the most common form of partnerships and coalitions, followed by coalitions (20%) and initiatives (7%), while no platforms were identified by the research.</p> <p>The CSF in Bosnia and Herzegovina has had a strong focus on supporting the capacity building of civil society, through support to strengthening networks; encouraging CSOs to specialize/ professionalise their activities and become more responsive to needs and become less dependent on current donor priorities. Support was provided to strengthening capacities of civil society to undertake their active role in fighting corruption (in particular in the areas of health and education); strengthening domestic election monitoring; support to networking CSOs in the areas of journalism and human rights, particularly the right to free access to information, freedom of expression, protection against violence and pressure, education, entrepreneurship and environment; and support to social dialogue and social partners (associations of employees, associations of employers, and governments).</p>
<p>2. To what extent are objectives at different levels (strategic, MIPDs and programmes) clear, measurable and realistic?</p> <p>CSF Objectives are generally clear and realistic, and its priorities are well aligned with the needs of civil society in the country – capacity building, dialogue with authorities and empowerment. However, they need further elaboration in order to render them measurable, including introduction of SMART indicators, at all levels. This should be reflected in the CSF programming documents, in its future database and, more explicitly, in the conditions of its tenders (service contracts) and calls for proposals (grant contracts).</p> <p>There is no systematic presence of intervention logic parameters and indicators, which renders follow-up, monitoring and evaluations more difficult and does not allow for any benchmarking and assessments on result achievement (performance as per the EU's Results Framework) of the Instrument as a whole, and of the individual projects it has funded.</p>
<p>3. To what extent does programming take adequate and relevant account of assistance provided and reforms promoted by other (key) donors? (also pertinent to discussions of coordination/ complementarity)</p> <p>CSF programming is informed by other key donor strategies, though there are overlaps in areas of support.</p> <p>Donors are slowly withdrawing from Bosnia and Herzegovina and the support to CSOs is decreasing, particularly in the last five years. At the same time, government funding is still not reaching all CSOs and all areas of support, leaving a gap in funding, particularly for CSOs dealing with human rights. In the shrinking donor space, the EU is the main source of funding, with USAID, Norway (limited funds), the Swiss and the Swedish still active. CSF objectives and areas of support are rather wide, and encompass support to an array of activities which are also the focus of support of other donors or other EU instruments. Still, interviews with USAID and CSOs show that there is interest in and efforts to find synergies and complementarities. For example, the CSF was funding networks and support to these networks has now been continued by USAID.</p> <p>There is no organised donor coordination mechanisms regarding civil society. Discussions regarding the role of civil society and related donor activities happen as part of EU coordination processes with EU Member States and also during bilateral meetings with USAID and other donors.</p>

³³ TACSO (2012); Assessment report on CSO networks/platforms/initiatives/coalitions in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Sarajevo

Responses
Relevance - Project Level
<p>4. To what extent has the use of the financial assistance to civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey been consistent with the objectives of the EU's support to civil society within the Enlargement Strategy?</p> <p>The actions funded from the CSF in Bosnia and Herzegovina are aligned with the Copenhagen political criteria for accession.</p> <p>The CSF has been focused in the EU political agenda some of these important issues have been covered by the CSF, anticorruption, justice, human rights, good governance, etc.</p>
<p>5. To what extent does the financial assistance respond to the specific needs of civil society in the targeted sectors?</p> <p>The CSF financial assistance responds to the specific needs of civil society as recognised in different studies, but also EU Progress reports.</p> <p>CSF programming documents provide comprehensive overview of state of civil society and main issues and needs civil society organisations and other civil society actors have. EU Progress reports also provide analysis of civil society but also other areas where CSO actions are relevant and CSF priorities correspond with these priorities.</p>
Efficiency
<p>6. To what extent has the provided financial assistance reached grassroots and community-based organisations?</p> <p>CSF financial assistance has increased its reach to grassroots and community-based organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The main weakness of the assistance is that grassroots organisations have no possibility to receive funds directly, but only through an intermediary organisation.</p> <p>Interviews with all stakeholders indicate that, while the CSF is reaching out to grassroots organisations through projects implemented by UN agencies, or international organisations, or large local organisations, small local organisations have no way of getting CSF funding directly. CSF procedures are very strict, with financial and administrative requirements that make it impossible for smaller organisations to apply for or to receive the funds. Most organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina do not have the required technical capacities, financial portfolio or previous reference projects to be eligible for CSF funding. Due to these issues, only a limited number of organisations continue to receive CSF funding.</p> <p>Further, the local CSOs compete with large international actors (the UN or international CSOs), who have strong track records and proven capacities in the development of strong applications, which is seen by local stakeholders as 'unfair competition'.</p> <p>Outreach to local, grassroots organisations happens through support to networks or through re-granting, an approach that is seen as appropriate support to organisations, through networks, and is a way in which peer learning and capacity building happens. For example, KULT³⁴ developed a curriculum with 6 modules of capacity building for its Network members, shared through training sessions that were accompanied by ongoing cooperation and support.</p>

³⁴ The Project "Youth watch youth policy!- Monitoring of implementation of youth policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina" implemented by KULT, contract no. 2012/310-583

Responses
<p>The UNDP LOD III Project³⁵ has provided specific training on Project Cycle Management and the LOD Methodology to 31 LSU officials and 144 CSO representatives; financial support to 76 CSO projects selected and co-financed by local self-government on the basis of the LOD methodology; and continuous coaching to enhance local self-government and CSO communication, coordination and joint cooperation.</p>
<p>7. To what extent has DG NEAR used an appropriate mix of funding instruments to reach the stated objectives of CSF support?</p> <p>CSF assistance in Bosnia and Herzegovina is mixed, with regards to the types of grant instruments that are used in the provision of funding.</p> <p>CSF assistance has been delivered through different types of support. As in most countries, the majority of assistance has been provided through short and long-term action grants (29 grants), also technical assistance (2 grants) and financial contributions to third parties (sub-granting) (2 grants). As well as each of these types of grants from the national CSF programme, a number of regional and multi-beneficiary projects operate in BiH, some based in BiH CSOs and some where BiH CSOs are partners.</p>
<p>8. To what extent is the provided financial assistance flexible enough to respond to changing needs?</p> <p>Overall, CSF assistance is flexible and responds to changing needs of civil society organisations.</p> <p>Review of sampled projects and interviews with implementing organisations indicate that the EU has been flexible with approving amendments to projects, in support of a greater attainment of results, where there has been a change in context during project implementation. The EU has also acted appropriately in case of the serious floods that took place in Bosnia in 2015, where the immediate focus of the EU was turned to relief actions. As implementation of projects was affected by floods, the EU showed flexibility in extending dates, to accommodate the new reality.</p> <p>While some small amendments (mainly extension of timeframe of projects or small budget reallocations) are approved easily, CSF rules and procedures are not sufficiently flexible to allow for larger changes within projects. CSF projects, despite the fact that their duration is longer, do not have an inception phase. This is a significant weakness of the CSF, as an inception phase could ensure that projects increase their relevance and effectiveness by further strengthening their implementation methodology and/ or targeting.</p>
<p>Effectiveness</p>
<p>9. To what extent is the financial assistance contributing to addressing the needs and priorities of the civil society sector? (Focus on civil society.)</p> <p>There is a varying degree of effectiveness of CSF assistance in addressing the civil society needs.</p> <p>The CSF has invested consistent effort in supporting the development of an enabling environment for the development of civil society, through two rounds of technical assistance for government institutions, at different levels of government in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as through TACSO. TACSO directly facilitated development of the government strategy for an enabling environment for civil society, albeit with no success due to external political factors linked</p>

³⁵ Project “Reinforcement of Local Democracy III (LOD III): Institutionalizing Cooperation between Municipalities and CSOs for Improved Service Delivery” implemented by UNDP, contract no. 2012/293-657

Responses
<p>to the complex governance system in the country. The TA project³⁶ supported government institutions in improving communication channels between government ministries and designated civil society organisations. As a result of this assistance, institutional mechanisms were established in Republika Srpska (within the Ministry of Governance and Self-governance) and through focal points for civil society in FBiH and in the Brčko District. However, the project could not succeed in the establishment of the foreseen office for cooperation with civil society within the prime minister's office. As an alternative, each line ministry has at least one coordinator for public consultation with civil society. As well, the TA project succeeded in setting up a website for consultations with civil society, which is currently in use.</p> <p>With regards to effectiveness of support to the capacities of CSOs in internal organisation and organisational capacity, the CSF has had more success. A desk review of available CSF programming documents and sampled projects, as well as evaluation interviews, indicate strong results from the CSF in terms of improvements to individual CSO and network capacities. For example, the UNDP LOD III Project³⁷ succeeded in reaching out to a significant number of grassroots organisations, improving their capacities in the development of project proposals, which resulted in an increase in government funding to local CSOs. As well, projects supported the strengthening of networks, with results visible in the ways in which networks operate, with improved strategic planning and coordination among their members (e.g. the KULT³⁸ network and the network lead by the Association «Nasa Djeca»³⁹.)</p>
<p>10. To what extent is the financial assistance contributing to achievement of CSF's stated strategic objectives and priorities? (Focus on the CSF itself.)</p>
<p>The CSF assistance has had mixed success in supporting the development of an active civil society that is capable of participating in the public debate on democracy, human rights, social inclusion and the rule of law, as well as to influence policy and decision-making processes.</p> <p>CSF assistance in Bosnia and Herzegovina has had a strong focus on empowering civil society organisations to take an active role in decision-making processes and to also fulfil their mandates, individually and/ or through networks. Available evaluations and final reports of sampled projects show results in building the capacities of civil society organisations and their further professionalization. However, less visible results in terms of the ensuring of an enabling environment for the development of civil society, the full range of the CSF's priorities were not achieved. At the individual level, projects have contributed to improved interactions between beneficiary CSOs and government/ public authorities and among/ between CSOs. However, this interaction is mainly project related, and on many occasions, cease to exist upon expiry of funds or finalisation of projects.</p>
<p>11. To what extent are the different implementation instruments effective in providing support to civil society?</p>
<p>Different implementation instruments have mixed level of effectiveness in providing support to civil society.</p>

³⁶ Technical assistance project CBGI, contract no. 2012/1307-716

³⁷ Project "Reinforcement of Local Democracy III (LOD III): Institutionalizing Cooperation between Municipalities and CSOs for Improved Service Delivery" implemented by UNDP, contract no. 2012/293-657

³⁸ The Project "Youth watch youth policy!- Monitoring of implementation of youth policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina" implemented by KULT, contract no. 2012/310-583

³⁹ Project: "Voice of Children", contract no. 2012/310-808

Responses
<p>Interviews with stakeholders and a desk review of available documentation indicate that the different instruments have had varying degree of effectiveness. Action grants with CSOs have shown a high level of effectiveness.</p> <p>On the other hand, technical assistance projects (TA to government and the TACSO project) are having mixed results. As discussed above, TA to government (the CBGI project⁴⁰) was successful in the establishment of institutional mechanisms for civil society consultations at lower levels of governance, but has not been successful at the state level. Interviews indicate that TACSO has had mixed results in the extent to which it built capacities of CSOs.</p> <p>Both national and engagement in regional projects, as well as the range of sub-granting initiatives, are also demonstrating a relatively high level of effectiveness.</p>
Impact
12. What have been the impacts of the CSF to date?
<p>Impact from CSF funding in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not high overall, although at the project level some impacts are more visible.</p> <p>Bosnia and Herzegovina's civil society is still relatively young and its development is rather uneven, with significant differences found between the stronger CSOs in the capital and larger cities and the weak, local, grassroots organisations in smaller communities. The fact that donor aid to civil society is shrinking has affected many organisations, with a number disappearing, or decreasing their activities significantly. The EU remains the main donor to civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but with the strict application requirements, only a small percentage of organisations can apply, and can win access to the funds.</p> <p>The impact assessment of the IPA 2012 grant scheme for CSO networks, conducted in 2016, notes that 'the funded networks were profiled and mostly consolidated allowing them to continue with enhancing the constructive dialogue and collaboration with public authorities. This type of an assertive dialogue has been proven to be fruitful as well as having the potential to be effective and impact-oriented'. The assessment also found that 'Organisations involved in the targeted networks have shown strong commitment to jointly address common issues which would be impossible to solve through separate efforts of each organisation individually'⁴¹.</p>
13. Are regional networks funded through the CSF effectively advocating for policy reforms in the Western Balkans and Turkey?
All discussions about regional networks are found in the Multi-beneficiary and Regional Project Evaluation Matrix, which can be found at Annex/ Appendix 9.
14. What factors are there, which contribute to or hamper impact?
The factors that have hampered CSF impact are related to political factors, as well as to low institutional and human capacities within grassroots CSOs, and a lack of continuous financial support for CSOs.

⁴⁰ Technical assistance project CBGI, contract no. 2012/1307-716

⁴¹ European Union (2016); Impact assessment of IPA 2012 grant scheme for CSO networks; Sarajevo

Responses
<p>Political complexities have a strong effect on the level to which there is space for civil society activism and inclusion in societal processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As well, there is high level of mistrust between government and civil society and a certain level of social distance between the two sectors of society, affecting negatively the level to which civil society can take a more active role in policy processes.</p> <p>CSOs also have varying degrees of professionalization in different fields, caused, among other things, by the need to constantly fundraise, which makes it difficult to build expertise in only one field, particularly if this field is not attractive to donors. This causes organisations to become donor-driven and develop different, shallow expertise in many different areas.</p> <p>Another hindering factor is unstable funding for organisations, creating uncertainty and wasting enormous energy in fundraising and complying with donor requirements instead of 'doing the job'. Many CSOs do not have capacities and/ or the necessary financial portfolio to access funding, which has caused many, even stronger CSOs, to disappear.</p> <p>Finally, a strong factor hindering impact and sustainability is the situation where government institutions are interested in or have capacity to work with or engage CSOs while there is project funding, but their support, and level of maintenance of results decreases or disappears once funds are longer available.</p>
Sustainability
15. To what extent are the impacts noted to date sustainable and likely to continue producing effects after the end of CSF assistance?
<p>The sustainability of CSF actions in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains fragile, and many of the actions financed by the CSF will face difficulties in producing effects after projects close.</p> <p>While projects show results during project activity, many of these results disappear or decrease soon after the project ends, mainly due to the project orientation of organisations. Another factor is the lack of willingness or capacities of government partners, to maintain mechanisms or the cooperation that has been established, when funds expire. An example of this is the UNDP LOD Project⁴² - many municipalities did not continue applying mechanisms for CSO funding after finalisation of project activities (and project funds). The project worked a lot on ensuring sustainability mechanisms, but the sustainability was mixed. The evaluation of LOD III found "the sustainability of the LOD methodology in each of the LSUs⁴³ that has participated in the LOD project remains fragile since it deals with public resource allocation, which is a political issue and therefore subject to manipulation by politicians for as long as it is not strongly anchored in the local government financial management practice. At present, the actual active continuation or even a further development or wider application of the LOD methodology in a certain LSU depends to a large extent on the personality, the political will and the capacities of the main political leaders, even if the council has adopted a resolution that formalises the use of LOD methodology for CSO grant allocation."⁴⁴</p>
Cross-cutting Issues (gender and human rights)
16. Is there a sufficient and effective focus in CSF funding on human rights and gender equality?

⁴² Project "Reinforcement of Local Democracy III (LOD III): Institutionalizing Cooperation between Municipalities and CSOs for Improved Service Delivery" implemented by UNDP, contract no. 2012/293-657

⁴³ local self-governments

⁴⁴ Vicente, Laia Castells (2014); External Project Final Evaluation: Reinforcement Of Local Democracy III (LOD III); UNDP Sarajevo

Responses
<p>The focus on human rights in the CSF for Bosnia and Herzegovina is strong; however, the focus on gender seems to be more declarative than essential.</p> <p>CSF supported a number of projects dealing with different aspects of human rights, in line with the Copenhagen criteria, and this support is perceived as positive and important. However, while gender has been integrated as a separate section of proposals, and also has been emphasised as important, the gender aspect is still more on the quantitative level (e.g. gender disaggregation of participation) or declarative, rather than a real focus.</p>
Environment
<p>17. Is there a sufficient and effective focus in CSF guidelines on the environment?</p> <p>There is enough focus on environment in the CSF for Bosnia and Herzegovina.</p> <p>There was a special Call for Proposals for environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2014.</p>
Coherence, Coordination and Consistency
<p>18. To what extent are the different national and regional actions of the CSF programme coherent/ complementing/ overlapping?</p> <p>CSF actions in Bosnia and Herzegovina follow priorities as recognised by EU programming documents and EU progress reports. Still, there is a potential for overlap between CSF, CBC and EIDHR, and some sectoral support instruments.</p> <p>There is a clear complementarity in the work of the CSF with EIDHR, although areas of overlap are noted. In its 'support to democratic processes', the EIDHR has a specific focus on '<i>cooperation between civil society and local authorities and relevant state institutions</i>', which, while complementary to the CSF, can be seen also as clearly overlapping with the CSF's objectives with public authorities, and advocacy in support of democratic issues and participation in the democratic process. The CSF focus on social inclusion, anti-discrimination and gender complement EIDHR priorities, but also can be seen as overlapping with the EIDHR's strong emphasis on vulnerable groups.</p> <p>There are however visible, and not unimportant issues related to coherence to be addressed across/ within the CSF. These issues are visible in a number of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of consistency between EUDs and between EUDs and DG NEAR in the frameworks of Calls. While not strictly speaking a 'problem', this lack of consistency is indicative of a lack of strategic coherence. • EUDs do not know enough about MBs, generally and in their country. There is a related lack of correlation in the responses provided by EUDs and DG NEAR to questions from funded organisations. • There is not enough learning across EUDs and up to DG NEAR, particularly in relation to successful approaches and strategies.
<p>19. To what extent do supported projects ensure fulfilment of the visibility strategy set by the European Commission?</p>

Responses
<p>The CSF projects follow EU visibility requirements.</p> <p>A review of sample project documentation and interviews confirm that all projects reviewed adhere to EU visibility requirements.</p>
<p>Added Value</p>
<p>20. What value is added to the work and initiatives of beneficiary countries compared to that which might be achieved without the contributions of the CSF?</p> <p>The key added value of the CSF is that the CSF is an instrument that is totally independent from government or actor other than civil society. The fact that the CSF is programmed centrally takes away from any concern that there can be government influence in selection of priorities for funding.</p> <p>Another value added of the CSF in Bosnia and Herzegovina is that it remains one of the rare funding mechanisms for CSOs, closing the gap that opened with the withdrawal of other donors, and a lack of more transparent government funding for CSOs.</p>

7.4.4 Conclusions

Relevance

The CSF is a very relevant instrument for support to civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Relevance is high both from the point of strong linkages of the CSF objectives to the Copenhagen Political criteria for accession and their operationalisation for Bosnia and Herzegovina in terms of preservation of democratic governance and human rights. Civil society empowerment is integral part of the political criteria for the EU accession process. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is a lack of a government strategy for civil society, so the support is critical to ensure civil society is capacitated to take a more active role in decision making processes, while CSF support in the form of Technical Assistance was relevant for the role of the government in successfully performing and establishing the conducive environment for the sustainable development of civil society. CSF objectives are based on thorough assessments of the context and the state of civil society and are informed by other key donor strategies. The potential for overlap with other donor support exists, particularly in assistance to networks. The key added value of the CSF is that the CSF is an instrument that is independent of government or actors other than civil society. The fact that the CSF is programmed centrally takes away from any concern that there can be government influence in selection of priorities for funding.

CSF Objectives are generally clear and realistic, although the main weakness of the structure is the lack of indicators which would be used to measure results and outcomes of assistance.

Efficiency

Generally, CSF financial assistance is efficient. The cycle of programming, tendering and contracting goes relatively quickly, without major delays. The assessment of sampled projects did not show significant delays in project implementation. CSF financial assistance has increased its reach to grassroots and community-based organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The main weakness of the assistance is that grassroots organisations have no possibility to receive funds directly, but only through an intermediary organisation. The main challenges to organisations are the use of English as the language of applications, strict requirements in terms of the track record of organisations wishing to apply and the high level of required co-financing, which for many organisations is not

possible to reach. Government does not have any co-financing measures to support the work of CSOs, and in the shrinking donor space, organisations find it more and more difficult to ensure co-financing for CSF projects.

The evaluation found that CSF assistance is flexible and responds to the changing needs of civil society organisations and of the government. This is extremely important in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the political and socio-economic context is very complex and affects civil society significantly. This flexibility also raises the very relevance of CSF.

Effectiveness

There is a varying degree of effectiveness of CSF assistance in addressing civil society needs. With regards to effectiveness of support to the capacities of CSOs in internal organisation and organisational capacity, the CSF has had more success, with direct results seen in improvements to individual CSO and network capacities. Different implementation instruments have different level of effectiveness, with action grants and sub-granting initiatives showing a high level of effectiveness, while TA initiatives have more mixed results. However, the extent to which CSF assistance was successful in supporting the development of an active civil society, capable of participating in the public debate on democracy, human rights, social inclusion and the rule of law, as well as to influence policy and decision-making processes, is less pronounced.

Impact

Impact from CSF funding in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not high overall, although at the project level impacts are more visible. Civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina in its current form is relatively young and still dependent on external support due to the fact that government support is still uneven and not systematic. Donor space is shrinking, leaving the EU as the main donor in the country. CSF supported projects, at their levels, have more visible outcomes on specific target groups. However, as CSF assistance is still rather fragmented, focused mainly on action grants in different themes, the impacts are more difficult to find. One of the internal factors for CSF is a lack of SMART indicators and lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation of assistance. This prevents reflection on outcomes and impacts of assistance overall. Most visible impact of the assistance is seen in the profiling and consolidation of networks, allowing them to continue with enhancing constructive dialogue and collaboration with public authorities. External factors affecting CSF ability to achieve positive outcomes and impacts are political, as well as the low institutional and human capacities within grassroots CSOs, and a lack of continuous financial support for CSOs.

Sustainability

The sustainability of CSF actions in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains fragile, and many of the actions financed by the CSF will face difficulties in producing effects after projects close. Due to the lack of more systematic and transparent mechanisms for funding of CSOs, as well as the lack of an overall government strategy for ensuring the enabling environment for the development of civil society, the sustainability prospects of CSF results, even at project level, are weak. At project level, some achievements (for example, stronger cooperation with government; inputs in policies and legislation, new services or mechanisms for support to final beneficiaries) are sustainable, but due to fragmentation of CSF support and shrinking donor space, the sustainability of overall results is mixed.

Cross-cutting areas

The focus on human rights in the CSF for Bosnia and Herzegovina is strong; however, the focus on gender seems to be more declarative than essential. Focus on environment has been positive. While CSF assistance appropriately targets issues relating to human rights and the environment (this later also being a topic of one CSF CfP in Bosnia and Herzegovina), it seems that gender is included more as declarative and not truly mainstreamed concept. CfPs require elaboration, in a separate section, on how gender (as well as other cross-cutting issues) can be tackled by projects, but assessment of applications

illustrates that gender is mentioned but not necessarily elaborated. Gender is also presented in most cases through gender disaggregation of participation in events or trainings, but no deeper analysis is performed. This is a weakness of the CSF approach to this cross-cutting issue.

Coherence

CSF actions in Bosnia and Herzegovina follow priorities as recognised by EU programming documents and EU progress reports. Still, there is a potential for overlap between CSF, CBC and EIDHR, and some sectoral support instruments. There is only a minimum of visible learning and sharing between EUDs and with DG NEAR, in relation to the design, implementation and administration of CfPs. A more considered approach has the potential to improve CSF outcomes by improving systems and approaches across the whole of the regional programme.

Visibility

CSF projects follow EU visibility requirements. The CSF is, besides the EIDHR, the most visible instrument for civil society. Participation in CSF-funded projects also allows organisations to work on stronger advocacy and inclusion in policy processes, which in turn, raises the visibility of the EU as a donor. Also, as civil society organisations work at the local level, their proactive promotion of the EU as a donor raises awareness of EU support in local communities. Having said this, the current requirements for visibility, and their implementation, do not ensure a sufficiently high level of EU visibility from the financing and outputs/outcomes of CSF projects. The intent of the EU through this funding, and the contribution to civil society development from the CSF, is not well-enough understood across society in BiH.

7.4.5 Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the EUD, together with DG NEAR, improve monitoring and evaluation of the CSF through the introduction of SMART indicators at all levels of results. Further, it is recommended that the EUD initiate project evaluations, particularly where projects are larger, and/ or longer.
2. It is recommended that the EUD ensure internal coherence among instruments (particularly EIDHR, CBC and CSF) through discussions and decisions on funding priorities and themes and the timeliness of CfPs, with the intent of a greater reach to different types of organisations.
3. It is recommended that the EUD facilitate the application processes for grants, and the possibilities for organisations to successfully apply for grants through:
 - a. Introduction of different LOTs for larger/ stronger organisations and for smaller/ weaker organisations.
 - b. Introduction of local language/s in applications.
4. It is recommended that the EUD include an inception phase in all projects of a longer duration (3+years).
5. It is recommended that the EUD engage in a process with DG NEAR and other EUDs, to further develop requirements and frameworks for the inclusion of human rights and gender as cross-cutting themes. A specific focus of this recommendations is to develop particular assistance for CSOs, to ensure they understand both the intent of, and the potential outcomes of this focus.
6. It is recommended that the EUD, together with other EUDs in the region, and DG NEAR, introduce a revised approach to developing effective visibility approaches for supported actions. Some planning for these visibility processes will need to take place at the regional level (to be then implemented by funded organisations), and some will be the direct responsibility of funded organisations.

7.5 Annex/ Appendix 5 - Evaluation Matrix Kosovo

7.5.1 Fieldwork Implementation

The field mission in Pristina on the “Mid-term Evaluation of the Civil Society Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey” took place during the period April 24-27, 2017.

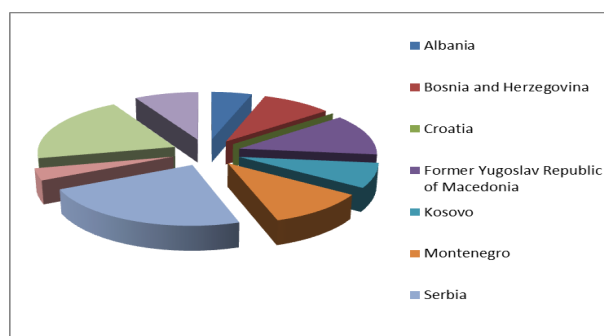
The field mission in Pristina has been organized in close collaboration between the team members, and the European Union Office to Kosovo (EUOK). The team met and conducted interviews with all the stakeholders and representatives of: i) the European Union Office to Kosovo, ii) Prime Minister’s Office of Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunities and Non-discrimination (Office for Good Governance), iii) civil society representatives, iv) donors representatives, and v) all the projects stakeholders involved with the implementation of the projects included in the project sample for Kosovo.

7.5.2 Kosovo Portfolio

The overall structure of the CSF portfolio 2011 – 2016 covered by the evaluation is shown below, as presented in the Inception Report (source: current CSF database).

Geographical Focus	Number of Contracts	Total EU Budget
Albania	19	EUR 6,087,544
BiH	33	EUR 12,912,470
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	45	EUR 9,911,482
Kosovo	27	EUR 8,544,842
Montenegro	39	EUR 6,688,387
Serbia	84	EUR 12,600,920
Turkey	13	EUR 11,058,604
WB and Turkey ⁴⁵	29	EUR 27,960,887
Multi-beneficiary ⁴⁶	73	EUR 35,055,931
Total	362	EUR 130,821,066

The breakdown of projects shows a relatively high share of Serbia (84 projects), followed by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (45) and Montenegro (39) and a considerably smaller number of projects in Turkey (13). It has nevertheless to be noted that the average EU budget of the projects in Turkey is considerably higher the overall average. The multi-beneficiary (multi-country and WBT) projects represent a significant share of the total (103).



The CSF portfolio of national projects funded in Kosovo in the 2011 – 2016 period has had the following structure by theme (total and average budget figures in Euros):

Breakdown of national project in Kosovo by theme	Number	Budget	Average
Civil Society development and local democracy	7	2,832,024.52	404,574.93
Social inclusion	8	3,463,683.68	432,960.46
Good governance (including PAR and Rule of law)	7	1,621,397.43	231,628.20
Media and freedom of expression	2	119,971.62	59,985.81

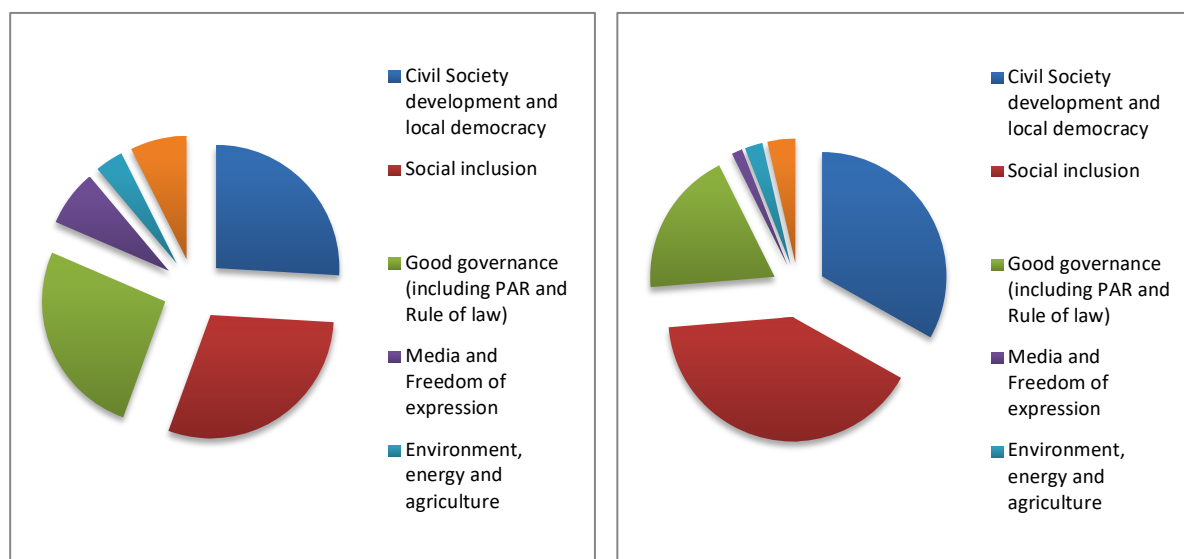
⁴⁵ This description is for contracts/ projects which focus on ALL countries in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

⁴⁶ This description is for contracts/ projects which focus on more than one beneficiary country (but NOT all countries).

Reconciliation and culture	2	308,842.80	154,421.40
Environment, energy and agriculture	1	198,921.52	198,921.52
TOTAL	27	8,544,842	316,475.61

Number of projects by theme

Total Budget by project theme



The national projects selected for the Kosovo sample are listed below; it is noted that all the projects in the sample for Kosovo national projects belong to the different implementation instruments (i.e. action grants, technical assistance, operation grants, long-term grants).

Contract number	Title	Budget	Thematic focus	
1	371879	Sub-granting scheme for grass-root CSOs advocacy initiatives in Kosovo	782,496.00	Civil society development and local democracy
2	372147	Kosovo education for employment network (KEEN)	1,055,597	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth
3	372768	Improving Governance - Empowering Civil Society Lot 2: Support to the implementation of the Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society	342,000.00	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)
4	373876	Work Programme - Reconciliation between Communities	66,012.00	Reconciliation and cultural dialogue
		Average budget per project 191,911		

Out of four (4) national projects in the sample, one (1) projects belong to the field of Civil society development and local democracy (16%), one (1) to the field of Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth (18%), one (1) to the field of Good Governance (16%) and one (1) Reconciliation and cultural dialogue (4%).

7.5.3 Evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations in Kosovo

The evaluation findings presented in the country annexes are placed within the approved evaluation matrix and thus all follow the same sequence:

Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Relevance – programming level	EQ 1 – EQ 3
Relevance – project level	EQ 4 – EQ 5
Efficiency	EQ 6 – EQ 8
Effectiveness	EQ 9 – EQ 11
Impact	EQ 12 – EQ 14
Sustainability	EQ 15
Cross-cutting Issues – Gender and Human Rights	EQ 16
Cross-cutting issues - Environment	EQ 17
Coherence, coordination and consistency	EQ 18 – EQ 19
Added Value	EQ 20
Lessons Learnt	EQ 21

The findings are followed by a synthesis in form of conclusions and recommendations. It is underlined that the findings and conclusions solely refer to Kosovo context and programme as far as they are not reflected in the general ones, on the level of CSF as a whole.

7.5.4 Responses to evaluation questions from the perspective of Kosovo projects

Responses
Relevance – Programming Level
1. To what extent are the defined objectives of the CSF relevant?
<p>The CSF objectives for Kosovo are aligned with the EU's Guidelines for support to civil society in enlargement countries, 2014-2020 (Guidelines), the Government Strategy for Cooperation with the Civil Society and other known sectorial strategies, with the main focus on strengthening capacities for and dialoguing with public institutions. The objectives were also directly linked to the Indicative Strategy Paper for Kosovo. The CSF objectives have been drafted with the participation of the CSOs and to great extent reflect CSO needs.</p> <p>CSF objectives have been identified in close collaboration with CSOs, and TACSO/ Resource Centre has played a key role in this process. A good approach (bottom up) has been used in their identification, a large consultative process was organised with all interested groups. Civil society has been involved in the preparation of the needs assessment and the identification of CSF objectives.</p> <p>The CSF objectives are focused on two main general issues within a variety of targeted thematic sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening capacities for and dialoguing with public institutions (central and local government); • Increase in CSO capacities. <p>Strengthening capacities for and dialoguing with public institutions (central and local government)</p> <p>As capacity and influence on policy-making and decision-making has been identified as one of the main challenges by civil society in Kosovo and this has been the main focus of the CSF Kosovo in the evaluation period. Several specific thematic areas were targeted (and with different instruments) to help CSOs in these sectors, i.e. youth, socio-economic partners, accountability and transparency of public authorities, culture etc. Also, CSF was used to support strengthening of Government capacities via a TA project supporting the Office on Good Governance-OGG in charge of implementing the Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society.</p> <p>Increase in CSO capacities</p> <p>This strand focused primarily at grassroots organisations via a general grant scheme and targeted civil society actors in media, inter-communal and other specific sectors (via operating grants).</p> <p>Both of the issues are also underlined and complemented with the Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society, whose implementation is supported by the CSF.</p> <p>Some measures, such as the focus on partnership, have strengthened and consolidated CSOs. This has translated well in terms of support to grassroots organisations.</p> <p>While Media and freedom of expression is identified as an area of intervention, this has been minimal (2 operating grants) or only as a horizontal issue.</p>

Responses
<p>2. To what extent are objectives at different levels (strategic, MIPDs and programmes) clear, measurable and realistic?</p> <p>The CSF objectives are linked and translated within strategic country documents. They have formulated general and clear indicators, main of which aligned with the Guidelines' targets for Kosovo. The intervention logic of the CSF is comprehensive, although small CSOs face difficulties in becoming familiar with the CSF's intervention logic.</p> <p>The overall CSF programme objectives are broad (e.g. improvement in the social, economic, political context in which civil society operates, improvement in aggregate scores for social well-being (dignity for all), corruption, inequality and national income) and are translated to Kosovo in a similarly broad way. Still, at the level of Calls for Proposal, the Kosovo programme is specifically targeted to defined sectors.</p> <p>While the indicators are clear and realistic and provisions have been made via the Guidelines and CSF support directly for them to be measured and baselined (e.g. public consultation platform can allow for a tool to measure the % of legislation/strategies consulted), they need to be better linked to CSF supported projects and targets of the Guidelines for Kosovo.</p> <p>CSOs/ beneficiaries are involved in programming, but there is an obvious gap in capacities to engage by grassroots CSOs directly in this process.</p>
<p>3. To what extent does programming take adequate and relevant account of assistance provided and reforms promoted by other (key) donors? (also, pertinent to discussions of coordination/ complementarity)</p> <p>While donor coordination forums in Kosovo exist, they provide mainly for a formal exchange of information and less for coordinating donor support. In Kosovo, which still has a high number of foreign donors present, except for their focus on similar issues concerning civil society, these forums are not yet providing for enhanced coordination and synergies between their work.</p> <p>There is a sectoral working group on governance, coordinated by the Ministry of European Integration, which among other areas includes the area of civil society, and an informal donor group on civil society led by SIDA, which takes the form of periodic (quarterly) meetings between the main donors active in Kosovo: EUOK, SIDA, SDC, Luxemburg, USAID, ADA, etc. There is a good example of bilateral coordination through the case of funds pooled by SDC and Denmark and managed by KCSF.</p> <p>There is little linkage between different donors programmes at the programming phase. There is an informal database of projects coordinated by SIDA. EUOK has funded mapping and is preparing to launch support to establish a donor coordination online database, which is expected to improve donor coordination and avoid overlapping between different donor programmes in the area of civil society, by the end of 2017. The database is to be public and based on joint ownership of donors, as indicated through the signing of a Cooperation Agreement.</p>
<p>Relevance - Project Level</p>
<p>4. To what extent has the use of the financial assistance to civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey been consistent with the objectives of the EU's support to civil society within the Enlargement Strategy?</p> <p>CSF actions and projects in Kosovo are within the scope of the Guidelines and the Enlargement Strategy objectives for Kosovo, with more focus on dialogue and the capacities of CSOs, and to lesser extent on other enabling environment issues for CSOs and the media.</p>

Responses
<p>Many of the actions have been directly linked to Copenhagen criteria, including 7 projects (or 26%) in the area of good governance. Still, media and freedom of expression have been underrepresented with only 2 projects (or 7%).</p> <p>Several actions have been focused directly on results and targets identified within the Guidelines for Kosovo, especially in area of dialogue (consultations with public institutions) and building the capacities of CSOs (incl. grassroots organisations), but less on issues related to freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and the tax framework. TA to the OGG (part of the sample) and the grant to the CiviKos network, have also contributed to building horizontal capacities and developing a more structural engagement between public institutions and CSOs.</p> <p>Expected results and indicators have not been translated thoroughly, and linked to provide for consistent monitoring of CSF performance. CSF financial assistance has combined support to both general (dialogue, capacity-building) and sector-specific issues (youth, anti-corruption, women, culture, education, social partners etc.).</p>
<p>5. To what extent does the financial assistance respond to the specific needs of civil society in the targeted sectors?</p> <p>CSF financial assistance responds to the specific needs of civil society in Kosovo in terms of general support for its development and support in specific sectors of their concerns. CSOs are involved in the preparation of strategies and other relevant legislation. Still, more support to grass-root and community initiatives as well as long-term support instruments is needed.</p> <p>At the level of planning, there is evidence that CSOs are involved in the definition of strategies and other relevant legislation. CSOs in Kosovo are participating effectively in the preparation of strategies and legal frameworks. The CSF makes reference to specific sector needs and in this way ensures the financial assistance provided from the CSF responds to the specific sector needs of the country. A needs assessment report is prepared by TACSO every two years, where progress is evidenced and the identification of new needs takes place where support can be provided from different CSF instruments.</p> <p>At the level of implementation, the financial assistance partially responds to the specific needs of the country. CSOs have been involved in the needs assessment prepared by TACSO but in general they lack information about the different types of assistance. The lack of information and weak capacities are the main factors that limit CSO participation in the identification of needs. This is particularly relevant for grassroots organisations, as their experience and impact in local communities are key elements of the achievements of the CSF's objectives.</p>
<p>Efficiency</p>
<p>6. To what extent has the provided financial assistance reached grassroots and community-based organisations?</p> <p>CSF financial assistance has increased its reach to grassroots and community-based organisations, most notably through a focused long-term project (Sub-granting scheme for grassroots CSO advocacy initiatives in Kosovo).</p> <p>Grassroots CSOs in Kosovo face difficulties in fulfilling the requirements set in Calls for Proposals, such as the adequate formulation of project proposals, the co-financing threshold (in case of being partners in CSF projects), language issues, documentation, etc.</p> <p>Setting-up a separate and focused scheme through a local implementing organisation (KCSF), which has been a pilot for Kosovo, has provided space for the differentiated approach that was needed to reach out and support grassroots and community-based organisations. Further focus on providing comprehensive capacity-building, mentoring and exchange support, as well as the potential for piloting of small-scale works, purchases on behalf of the community or co-financing (e.g. matching funds with municipalities, fundraising efforts) could well have lasting effects. Differentiating (lowering) expectations in terms of activity</p>

Responses
<p>levels and outputs is needed to allow such initiatives and organisations to grow and develop in the long-term, and to focus on results and impact. Also, start of the VAT exemption for sub-grantees is proving for a difficulty for these organizations.</p>
<p>7. To what extent has DG NEAR used an appropriate mix of funding instruments to reach the stated objectives of CSF support?</p> <p>CSF financial assistance in Kosovo is mixed in terms of thematic approach, instruments, and type and size of supported organisations. The Calls for Proposal address civil society needs. There is a need for better linking of CSF priorities with sectorial reforms.</p> <p>The thematic approach is balanced, although not all allocated funds have been contracted. For each Call for Proposals there are 20-25 CSOs that apply and 8-10 that are successful. The range of beneficiaries has been very wide, with open Calls for Proposals being used to ensure diversified thematic grant schemes. In the Calls for Proposals there are enough alternatives or thematic areas where CSOs can find themselves. There is no evidence that the administration of the programme has enabled the introduction of approaches for diversifying thematic grants schemes or to balance the support to CSOs.</p> <p>The instruments have been tailored to the specific objectives of the sector or intervention area (e.g. TA project was needed to enhance the Government capacity to implement the Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society) and support implementation of its key measures for specific expertise or operation grants targeted at specific marginalized areas and media to help development of strong advocacy and service organization close to the needs of these communities, which has been done for the first piloted in Kosovo. Here, providing the needed capacity-building support to operational grantees alongside the grant itself is crucial.</p>
<p>8. To what extent is the provided financial assistance flexible enough to respond to changing needs?</p> <p>The CSF financial assistance in Kosovo has been flexible enough to respond to the changing needs of CSOs, but challenges exist especially for smaller, grassroots CSOs.</p> <p>There is evidence that the EU assistance provided through the CSF has been flexible in addressing the changing needs of CSOs. Requests from funded organisations are generally granted upon provision of required information, although grant contracts lack flexibility. CSOs also note the broad definition of thematic areas in Calls for Proposals, which increases the ability of organisations to apply. One area of concern is that the process of consultation, definition of the framework of a Call for Proposals and then application, assessment and contracting process is such a long process that grants are provided based on applications from quite some time in the past – decreasing the relevance of the defined actions.</p> <p>Also, smaller and grass-root organizations lack capacities to be engaged directly, although many efforts have been undertaken by both TACSO/Resource Center and CiviKos platform to improve this.</p>
<p>Effectiveness</p>
<p>9. To what extent is the financial assistance contributing to addressing the needs and priorities of the civil society sector? (Focus on civil society.)</p> <p>The CSF financial assistance in Kosovo has contributed in improving an enabling environment for the civil society and in increasing the civil society capacities. CSOs in Kosovo are participating in drafting strategies, e.g. sectorial strategy on education, welfare and employment.</p> <p>The financial assistance has contributed to an increase in the participation of the CSOs in policy-making and a better environment for CSOs operation has been enabled. CSF assistance has been very effective in supporting improving of relations between public institutions and CSOs. Examples include the support to preparation of the Regulation on minimum standards of consultation, and platform of on-line consultations as well as publication of first report on</p>

Responses
<p>public funding fro CSOs. The financial assistance has contributed to improving the links between the needs and priorities of the civil society sector and CSF objectives/strategic priorities. One of the strategy objectives for CSOs in Kosovo has been to increase the participation of CSOs in policy-making. Another example is the Strategy for education in Kosovo and the draft Strategy for employment and welfare, which have been prepared with the contribution of the CSOs. The participation of CSOs has made it possible to include some important priorities in the Education strategy.</p> <p>The CSF has contributed to the preparation of the Strategy for Cooperation with the Civil Society in Kosovo - increased participation is one of the four pillars of the Strategy. There is an increased participation of civil society in Kosovo, and this increased participation has been effective. The Strategy is being monitored by the CiviKos platform – an indicator of effectiveness. CiviKos and KCSF are very good examples of an increased role of civil society in society.</p>
<p>10. To what extent is the financial assistance contributing to achievement of CSF’s stated strategic objectives and priorities? (Focus on the CSF itself.)</p> <p>The CSF assistance has contributed in reaching some of the stated objectives of CSOs. The CSF has made possible the participation of CSOs in the policy-making.</p> <p>A number of target groups had improved representation in the drafting and approval of the Regulation on minimum standards of consultation with civil society - a step forward which demonstrates improvement in the interactions between CSOs and public authorities.</p> <p>The CSF has contributed to increasing local democracy - the engagement of CSOs in society has increased due to the financial support of the CSF. For example, the Community Building Mitrovica (CBM) has established a network – the Mitrovica Monitoring team - where Kosovar and Serb citizens can participate actively and in decision-making processes. On the other side, the TA provided to the OGG is supporting the government in increasing its capacity for dealing with CSOs, so there are increased capacities on both sides: CSOs and Government.</p> <p>CSO capacity has increased, including engagement of CSOs in analysis and monitoring of government programmes and strategies. CSF support has contributed to a raising awareness of the role of civil society in society more generally, and dialogue between civil society and government has improved. Indeed, the Government of Kosovo shows a willingness to cooperate with civil society, as demonstrated in the move beyond ad hoc collaboration to the standardised form visible in the minimum standards for consultation.</p> <p>The CSF has promoted communication between different sectors to address the priorities of some targeted groups of society.</p>
<p>11. To what extent are the different implementation instruments effective in providing support to civil society?</p> <p>The CSF project portfolio in Kosovo is diverse in terms of implementing instruments. The implementation instruments have been introduced to address the civil society needs, their effectiveness depends to a large extent on the capacities of implementing CSOs and the availability of information with regard to better options of implementation.</p> <p>In the case of Kosovo, different implementation instruments have been used. From the total of 27 grant contracts, two have been TA, 6 have been operating grants and the balance have been short and long-term action grants. TA has been provided to the OGG with the intent of increasing government capacities to work with CSOs. TACSO also has contributed to increasing CSO capacity, while the implementation of other Strategy objectives has been financed with other CSF instruments.</p>

Responses
<p>Operating grants are effective instruments that support and contribute to increasing the capacities of small CSOs. For example, CBM is a grassroots CSO that has implemented an operational grant financed by the CSF. The operational grant has been used to cover the salary, rent and other administrative costs of CBM. The existence of the operational grant has made it possible to organize more activities and to be closer to the community. CBM has benefitted in the past from other operational grants from the Pax for Peace Organisation which established CBM and has contributed to increasing its capacities. In addition to Pax for Peace, CBM has been supported also from other organisations and foundations such as the Rockefeller Foundation and the Mott foundation. Operational grants are effective instruments, contributing to increased capacity without being project-based.</p> <p>Some CSOs have had difficulties with the implementation of operating grants and sub-granting, two new instruments introduced by the CSF following requests from CSOs. There are no guidelines for the use of these instruments and EC capacities for handling these two new instruments are low. As such, the share of these two instruments compared to other instruments is low.</p>
Impact
12. What have been the impacts of the CSF to date?
<p>The CSF has contributed to impact in society in Kosovo, and to the growth and influence of civil society, in a number of important, structural ways.</p> <p>It contributed to the laying down of structural preconditions for development of civil society and the enabling environment in which CSOs work, via the adoption of the Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society, Regulation on Minimum Standards for Consultation, adoption of the regulation on public funding for CSOs, etc.. This has also increased the cooperation of CSOs with national and local authorities in Kosovo, as the civil society sector has developed, and CSOs participate more actively in policy-making; Assisted with the improved quality of selected sectoral policies and laws through increased capacities for and participation of CSOs (including via the civil society established mechanism for selection of CSO representatives into working bodies (CiviKos)), as well as with inputs to EU integration process reforms (SAA).</p> <p>Taking the roots of citizen initiatives at local/municipal level, and their strengthened capacities, to address the needs of their communities.</p>
13. Are regional networks funded through the CSF effectively advocating for policy reforms in the Western Balkans and Turkey?
All discussions about regional networks are found in the Multi-beneficiary and Regional Project Evaluation Matrix, which can be found at Annex/ Appendix 9.
14. What factors are there, which contribute to or hamper impact?
<p>There are a number of factors which impact on CSF impact, including levels of capacity within government, the balance of development between rural and urban-based CSOs, and a dependency on foreign donors.</p> <p>While there is general political will and cooperation with CSOs, the political/inter-party instability and frequent election cycles hamper a continued commitment to cooperation and their input into policy- and decision-making.</p> <p>The relatively low capacity of civil servants, i.e. in many cases there are better capacities and qualified experts within CSOs (and especially in think-tanks), as well as their ownership/initiative vis-a-vis cooperation with CSOs.</p> <p>The uneven development of civil society with a focus on urban/Pristina-based organisations and the emphasis on support directed at good governance and rule of law issues, rather than community services, needs.</p>

Responses
<p>A dependency on foreign donors (affecting/driving the agendas of CSOs), which is of particularly noted in Kosovo, which, unlike other parts of the region still has significant contributions from foreign donors.</p>
Sustainability
<p>15. To what extent are the impacts noted to date sustainable and likely to continue producing effects after the end of CSF assistance?</p>
<p>The CSF has contributed to the development of a solid base for the enabling environment and effective operational support to CSOs.</p> <p>The structural developments (Strategy, Council, Minimum Standards, Public funding regulation etc.) all provide a solid base for the policy framework for participation and for improved local funding sources (via the state budget), that CSOs can use to build on CSF outputs and outcomes;.</p> <p>Improved networking (CiviKos; supported thematic networks) and operational support to strategic sector CSOs, are likely to provide for sustained outcomes and results of CSF assistance.</p> <p>Improved CSO capacities in how they manage their organisations and in how they undertake activities is likely to contribute to their longer-term sustainability</p> <p>They have improved knowledge and skills, and are developing their experience as organisations that are, and can be engaged in effective dialogue with the Government.</p>
Cross-cutting Issues (gender and human rights)
<p>16. Is there a sufficient and effective focus in CSF funding on human rights and gender equality?</p>
<p>While the framework and guidelines for prioritising human rights and gender equality are a visible focus in CSF documentation, to a certain extent their application is more ‘technical’ rather than complete.</p> <p>The CSF includes support to human rights and gender issues, but as an area of significant support, issues linked to minority rights, the rights of women and children and domestic violence have not been covered sufficiently.</p> <p>CSF project proposals and reporting include basic references to human rights and gender mainstreaming, but in most cases, this is only technical, without a significant focus being placed on these areas.</p>
Environment
<p>17. Is there a sufficient and effective focus in CSF guidelines on the environment?</p>
<p>While CSF includes relevant references to the environment, a focus on the environment has not happened to date in the priorities of Calls for Proposals. There is a low awareness of understanding of the environment in Kosovo that could be addressed with a greater focus.</p> <p>There has not been any direct support to environmental projects, but it has been reported that other IPA assistance has been supporting environment efforts (such as supporting consultation processes in the agriculture sector).</p> <p>Considering the rising environmental problem and low level of awareness among citizens, there is not enough focus (possibility) to environment within CSF.</p>

Responses
Coherence, Coordination and Consistency
<p>18. To what extent are the different national and regional actions of the CSF programme coherent/ complementing/ overlapping?</p> <p>Insufficient emphasis is placed within the CSF in Kosovo on coherence, internally to EUD functions and externally, with other donors.</p> <p>The existence of a basic donor information exchange and coordination, via a SIDA-led informal mechanism, ensures there are no major overlaps in civil society assistance. However, many donors are operating in the same or similar areas, supporting similar initiatives, and coordination and coherence is a challenge. Further, many of these initiatives are not linked to, or lead by, the country's sector or thematic strategies (if existing).</p> <p>In the area of improving volunteering policies, different, and at times competing, donor agendas are hampering the efforts of CSOs to empower citizen volunteering in CSOs.</p> <p>One good coherence example is the case of conditioning budgetary support in the area of public administration with inclusion of a benchmark indicator related to the percentage of the legislation consulted with the civil society.</p> <p>The CSF (and EIDHR) portfolio is split among the EUOK staff focused on a given field with the aim to improve thematic assistance coherence, but further coordination and coherence is needed vis-a-vis the political section to improve policy with funding coherence.</p> <p>While the EUOK and Sida are preparing an online database for donor programmes, there remains insufficient complementarity and coherence between donor programmes. Note is made of the USAID focus on the enabling environment, also clearly a key component of CSF priorities. Unlike other countries in the region, significant donor funding exists, beyond the EU, in Kosovo, and reform efforts would benefit from a greater focus on coherence and coordination.</p>
<p>19. To what extent do supported projects ensure fulfilment of the visibility strategy set by the European Commission?</p> <p>Funded organisations have a detailed understanding of EU visibility rules and are applying them consistently, although the requirements are much less well understood by grassroots and community-based organisations.</p> <p>CSF beneficiary CSOs apply EU visibility rules to project outcomes.</p> <p>Supported grassroots organisations face some difficulties and require assistance from lead organisations in applying the visibility rules.</p>
Added Value
<p>20. What value is added to the work and initiatives of beneficiary countries compared to that which might be achieved without the contributions of the CSF?</p> <p>The sub-granting scheme devoted to supporting grassroots and community-based organisations is a new and targeted approach to focus on small-scale and citizen-based initiatives, while most other donors support larger, professional CSOs, or cases of individual grassroots organisations only;</p>

Responses

With the adoption of the Minimum Standards for Consultation, and TA support to the online consultation platform, the individual CSF projects focused on sectoral/thematic issues (or such networks supported via network grants) will be able to contribute more effectively to the country's regulatory framework, and strategies being developed by public institutions.

Participation of grassroots organisation in the CSF is an important factor in the achievement of project results.

Partnerships between CSOs are a good opportunity to increase the capacities of the CSOs, particularly where these partnerships provide a sort of mentoring from larger, better established organisations and less experienced and/or grassroots/ community-based CSOs.

7.5.5 Conclusions

Relevance

CSF financial assistance is relevant and aligned with main EU and national strategic frameworks, still further focus on grass-roots, media and environment would be useful. The CSF objectives for Kosovo are aligned with the Guidelines and the EC Strategy Paper for Kosovo and have been translated into the Government Strategy for Cooperation with the Civil Society and other relevant sectorial strategies, with the main focus on strengthening capacities of CSOs for and dialogue with public institutions. There is less focus on issues related to the enabling environment, for CSOs and the media. There is a clear need for more support to grassroots and community initiatives, support for under-represented sectors such as the media and the environment. CSF objectives have been drafted with the participation of the CSOs, and to great extent reflect CSO needs, but there is a clear gap with direct inclusion of smaller, grassroots CSOs. The indicators included in the Strategy are general, and clear, and aligned with the Guideline targets for Kosovo. The intervention logic of the CSF is comprehensive, although small CSOs face difficulties in becoming familiar with the intervention logic. While donor coordination structures in Kosovo exist, they provide mainly for a formal exchange of information and less for coordinating donor support. There is an ongoing effort by EUOK to improve coordination, based on a Sida-led initiative via development of a comprehensive on-line donor project database.

Efficiency

CSF assistance to Kosovo used an efficient mix of support to provide for greater participation of CSOs in policy-making.. CSF financial assistance in Kosovo is mixed in terms of thematic approach, instruments, and type and size of supported organisations. Calls for Proposal address civil society needs. There is a need for a better linking of CSF priorities with sectorial reforms. The CSF has increased its reach to grassroots and community-based organisations. The CSF financial assistance in Kosovo has been flexible enough to respond to the changing needs of CSOs, but challenges exist for smaller, grassroots CSOs.

Effectiveness

The CSF has had a varying degree of effectiveness depending on external and internal factors. The CSF financial assistance in Kosovo has contributed to improving the enabling environment for civil society and an increase in civil society capacities. CSOs in Kosovo are participating in drafting strategies, e.g. the sectoral strategy on education, welfare and employment. CSF assistance has contributed to reaching some of the stated objectives of CSOs. The CSF has made possible the participation of CSOs in policy-making. The CSF project portfolio in Kosovo is diverse in terms of implementing instruments. The implementation instruments have been introduced to address civil society needs, their effectiveness depends to a large extent on the capacities of implementing CSOs and the availability of information with regard to better options of implementation.

Impact

Impact prospects of CSF funding in Kosovo are good, but depend on capacity within government and balancing the development of both urban and rural, professional and grassroots organisations. The CSF has contributed to impact in society in Kosovo, and to the growth and influence of civil society, in a number of important, structural ways. There are a number of factors which hamper the CSF impact, including levels of capacity within government, the balance of development between rural and urban-based CSOs, and a dependency on donor support.

Sustainability

The CSF has contributed to the development of a solid base for the enabling environment and effective operational support to CSOs.

Cross-cutting Issues

While the framework and guidelines for prioritising human rights and gender equality are a visible focus in CSF documentation, to a certain extent their application is more 'technical' rather than complete. While CSF guidelines include relevant references to the environment, a focus on the environment has not happened to date in the priorities of Calls for Proposals. There is a low awareness of understanding of the environment in Kosovo that could be addressed with a greater focus.

Coherence

Insufficient emphasis is placed within the CSF in Kosovo on coherence, internally to EUD functions and externally, with other donors. This is extremely important, as many foreign donors focusing on civil society remain present in Kosovo. However, a good coherence example is the case of conditioning budgetary support in the area of public administration with inclusion of a benchmark indicator related to the percentage of the legislation consulted with the civil society

Visibility

Funded organisations have a detailed understanding of EU visibility rules and are applying them consistently, although the requirements are much less well understood by grassroots and community-based organisations.

7.5.6 Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the EUD, together with DG NEAR, improve monitoring and evaluation of the CSF through the introduction of SMART indicators at all levels of results. Further, it is recommended that the EUD initiate project evaluations, particularly where projects are larger, and/ or longer.
2. It is recommended that the EUD ensure internal coherence among instruments (particularly EIDHR, CBC and CSF) through discussions and decisions on funding priorities and themes and the timeliness of CfPs, with the intent of a greater reach to different types of organisations.
3. It is recommended that the EUD facilitate the application processes for grants, and the possibilities for organisations to successfully apply for grants through:
 - a. Introduction of different LOTs for larger/ stronger organisations and for smaller/ weaker organisations.
 - b. Introduction of local language/s in applications.
 - c. Continue specific support to grassroots organisations with a focus on capacity-building, seed funding and matching funds.
4. It is recommended that the EUD, together with other EUDs in the region, and DG NEAR, introduce a revised approach to developing effective visibility approaches for supported actions. Some planning for these visibility processes will need to take place at the regional level (to be then implemented by funded organisations), and some will be the direct responsibility of funded organisations.
5. It is recommended that the EUD continue with the use of mixed instruments, appropriate for the specific sector and intervention, based on long-term support.
6. It is recommended that the EUD consider more support to underrepresented sectors, such as media and the environment.
7. It is recommended that the EUD further improve coherence of the CSF through support to sectoral policies and strategies currently being supported via other EU programmes/ projects, with the intent of increasing the effects and impact of CSF assistance.
8. It is recommended that the EUD include an inception phase in all projects of a longer duration (3+years).

7.6 Annex/ Appendix 6 – Evaluation Matrix former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

7.6.1 Fieldwork Implementation

The field mission in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on the “Mid-term Evaluation of the Civil Society Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey” took place during the period May 2 -5, 2017. Additional individual interviews with beneficiaries and sub-grantees that were not available in the field mission period, were interviewed up to May 22, 2017.

The field mission in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was organized in close collaboration between evaluation team members and the European Union Delegation (EUD).

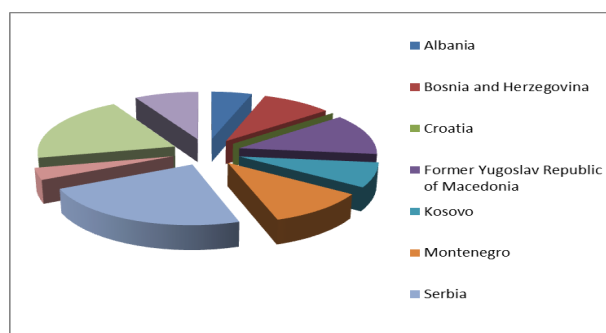
The team met and conducted interviews with all the stakeholders and representatives of: i) the European Union Delegation; ii) the Sector for European Affairs (SEA)/NIPAC iv) civil society representatives (beneficiaries, sub-grantees), v) donor representatives, and vi) all the projects stakeholders involved with the implementation of the projects included in the project sample for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Unit for Cooperation with Civil Society at the General Secretariat of the Government of the RM was not available to meet with the evaluation team.

7.6.2 The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Portfolio

The overall structure of the CSF portfolio 2011 – 2016 covered by the evaluation is shown below, as presented in the Inception Report (Source: current CSF database).

Geographical Focus	Number of Contracts	Total EU Budget
Albania	19	EUR 6,087,544
BiH	33	EUR 12,912,470
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	45	EUR 9,911,482
Kosovo	27	EUR 8,544,842
Montenegro	39	EUR 6,688,387
Serbia	84	EUR 12,600,920
Turkey	13	EUR 11,058,604
WB and Turkey ⁴⁷	29	EUR 27,960,887
Multi-beneficiary ⁴⁸	73	EUR 35,055,931
Total	362	EUR 130,821,066

The breakdown of projects shows a relatively high share of Serbia (84 projects), followed by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (45) and Montenegro (39) and a considerably smaller number of projects in Turkey (13). It has nevertheless to be noted that the average EU budget of the projects in Turkey is considerably higher the overall average. The multi-beneficiary (multi-country and WBT) projects represent a significant share of the total (103).



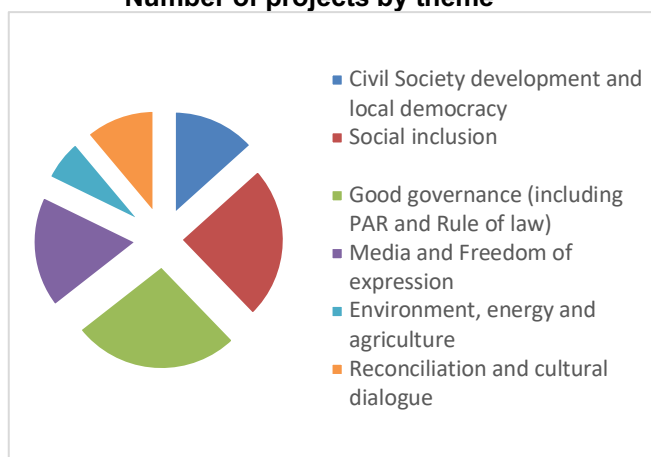
⁴⁷ This description is for contracts/ projects which focus on ALL countries in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

⁴⁸ This description is for contracts/ projects which focus on more than one beneficiary country (but NOT all countries).

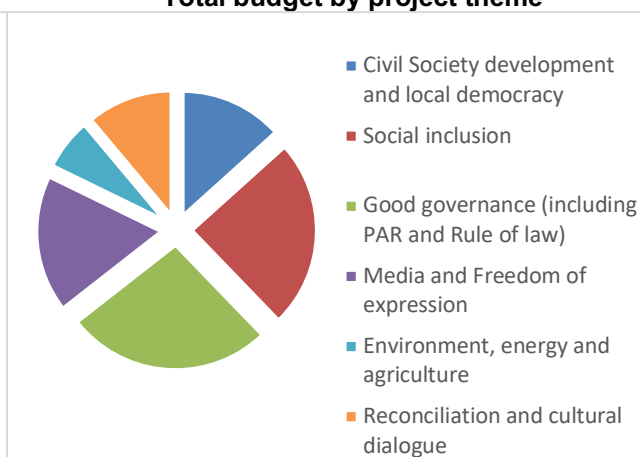
The CSF portfolio of national projects funded in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the 2011 – 2016 period has had the following structure by theme (total and average budget figures in Euros):

Cx	Number	Budget	Average
Civil society development and local democracy	6	1,456,631.57	242,771.93
Social inclusion	11	1,961,374.24	178,306.75
Good governance (including PAR and Rule of law)	12	2,591,094.89	215,924.57
Media and Freedom of expression	8	1,890,049.89	236,256.24
Environment, energy and agriculture	3	692,823.81	230,941.27
Reconciliation and cultural dialogue	5	1,319,507.52	263,901.50
TOTAL	45	9,911,481.92	228,017.04

Number of projects by theme



Total budget by project theme



The national projects selected for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia sample are listed below; it is noted that all the projects in the sample for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia national projects belong to the implementation instrument of short, medium and long-term action grants.

Contract Number	Project Title	Budget (in EUR)	Thematic Focus
333686	CSOs Watchdog Network to Prevent Spoils and Conflict of Interest in the Public Administration	182,714.13	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)
333780	Network 23	155,858	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)
338806	Youth Entrepreneurship Support Network	150,000	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth
370681	ReForMedia - Citizens, CSOs and Institutional Reforming Media in Macedonia	259,847	Media and freedom of expression
370964	IPA 2 Mechanism for Civil Society Organizations	279,639	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)

Contract Number	Project Title	Budget (in EUR)	Thematic Focus
338852	Coalition for Budget Monitoring	150,613	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)
371474	Roma CSO Network - Roma Community's Response	177,404.74	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth
371838	Stronger CSOs for participatory transposition and implementation of the EU 2020 climate and Energy Package	229,325.91	Environment, climate action, energy and agriculture
369849	Diversity is trendy - promoting local multiculturalism!	249,651.58	Reconciliation and cultural dialogue

This evaluation of national projects in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia represents 20 % of the total number of national projects funded under CSF in the 2011-2016 period. Out of nine (9) national projects in the sample, four (4) projects belong to the field of Good Governance (44,5%), two (2) to the field of social inclusion (22,5%), one (1) to the Media and freedom of expression (11%), one (1) for environment (11%) and one (1) to reconciliation and cultural dialogue (11%).

7.6.3 Evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The evaluation findings presented in the country annexes are placed within the approved evaluation matrix and thus all follow the same sequence:

Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Relevance – programming level	EQ 1 – EQ 3
Relevance – project level	EQ 4 – EQ 5
Efficiency	EQ 6 – EQ 8
Effectiveness	EQ 9 – EQ 11
Impact	EQ 12 – EQ 14
Sustainability	EQ 15
Cross-cutting Issues – Gender and Human Rights	EQ 16
Cross-cutting issues - Environment	EQ 17
Coherence, coordination and consistency	EQ 18 – EQ 19
Added Value	EQ 20
Lessons Learnt	EQ 21

The findings are followed by a synthesis in form of conclusions and recommendations. It is underlined that the findings and conclusions solely refer to the country and are not to be taken as general ones, on the level of CSF as a whole.

7.6.4 Responses to evaluation questions from the perspective of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia projects

Responses
Relevance – Programming Level
1. To what extent are the defined objectives of the CSF relevant?
<p>The CSF objectives and priorities were generally aligned with the Guidelines for EU support to civil society in Enlargement countries, 2014-2020 (Guidelines). Initiatives supporting the enabling environment provide the room to support the identified challenges and contribute to achieving outcomes relevant to the Guidelines, in improving the basic conditions for operation for CSOs, dialogue with institutions and development of CSO capacities. CSF country window objectives and priorities for the period 2011-2016 were consistent with the EC Enlargement Strategy for the region and the country. In the framework of the three Calls for Proposals (allocations 2012-3, 2014, 2015), stated objectives followed the identified setbacks in the general (enabling) environment in which civil society operates in the country, as well as the specific sector (also EU-acquis related) issues. Here, the media component became an important part of the support, in the 2014 allocation, as did support to the inter-communal relations/ multiculturalism/ Ohrid Framework Agreement, also as part of the Accession Partnership requirements for the country.</p> <p>More specifically, the programme focused on the following issues within the four general themes/areas:</p> <p>General/enabling environment for civil society.</p> <p>The main issues identified included deteriorating conditions, relations with public institutions and consultation processes (e.g. ENER), as well as a lack of any progress in implementing key structural reforms as part of the Government Strategy for Cooperation with NGOs 2012-2017, which was developed with support of an EU technical assistance (TA) project and in an inclusive process (e.g. establishing of an advisory Council, passing of a new regulation on transparent and accountable funding for CSOs from state funding).</p> <p>Consequently, the Government lacks the understanding of the role and operation of the CSF and involvement in consultations in the programming and information shared by the EUD and CSO on implementation of projects. It is noted that all national CSF programmes are managed centrally by the EUDs in each country, and by D5 in DG NEAR for regional and multi-beneficiary initiatives, with only some expressed interest in one country to move to a more decentralised approach. In the evaluation period, the Government managed, in parallel, funding for civil society under IPA I decentralized management, of which 1 Call for Proposal was cancelled and funding to civil society projects lost.</p> <p>Sector specific coverage is in line with identified setbacks and challenges in EC Progress Report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (2012-3 allocation): Environment; Social inclusion; Socio-economic development; Human rights; Transparency/good governance; • (2014, 2015 allocations): Public procurement, budget expenditure and execution; Public employment; Access to information and regulatory impact assessment; Quality of public services; Rights of the child; Combating different forms and manifestations of non-discrimination; Enhanced/Improved understanding and tolerance of LGBTI community.

Responses
<p>Media and freedom of expression.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling media environment; • Capacity-building for the regulatory environment, including self-regulation of journalists; • Support to media related initiatives. <p>Promoting improved inter-community relations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA); • Institutionalism of multiculturalism; • Media – diversity and inclusion; • Some focus on the Roma community.
<p>2. To what extent are objectives at different levels (strategic, MIPDs and programmes) clear, measurable and realistic?</p> <p>As a programme composed of regional, multi-beneficiary and national components, the CSF has defined objectives and (provisional) indicators at the level of the whole programme. While the objectives and indicators are translated and coherent with the Government Strategy for Cooperation with NGOs, 2012-2017, they are re-defined in a very broad way, rendering it difficult to follow-up, monitor and evaluate as well as benchmark and assess on result achievement (performance as per the EU's Results Framework) of the Instrument as a whole, and of the individual projects it has funded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CSF programme objectives are broad (e.g. improvement in the social, economic, political context in which civil society operates, improvement in aggregate scores for social well-being (dignity for all), corruption, inequality and national income) and are translated to the CSF country window in a similarly broad way. While the IPA Decision 2014-2015 and 2016-2017 have further indicators identified at the county level (e.g. funding mechanism for CSOs further strengthened; mechanism for permanent dialogue with civil society are operational), these are not fully in line with SMART requirements. • The Government Strategy for Cooperation with NGOs 2012-2017 generally follows the logic and with a concrete bi-annual action plan provides for a more detailed translation of CSF objectives. Still, this is mainly focused on the general/ enabling environment for civil society only. It is also not clear (or easy to establish) the extent to which the indicators have been linked or translated to sector-specific national strategies. • While the EU CS Guidelines provide for country specific targets to be achieved by the end of the IPA CSF Programme (2020), their concrete linkage to both regional/MB and country/nation programmes/projects is still mainly missing. The only exception (or best practice) here is the media projects, which have been requested to clear link their project interventions with the specific Media Guidelines results/indicators. • It was envisaged that TACSO – in cooperation with competent domestic institutions where applicable – would be responsible for establishing a results framework for aggregation of results at the 'outcome level' of the CSF including refining the indicators, making them Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART), at both regional/MB and national/county level. It is not clear to the extent this has taken place and has been implemented.
<p>3. To what extent does programming take adequate and relevant account of assistance provided and reforms promoted by other (key) donors? (also pertinent to discussions of coordination/ complementarity)</p>

Responses

The presence of donors in the country other than the EU is limited, both in terms of numbers of donor agencies and in terms of the range of sectors in which donors operate. The recent political crisis has encouraged a strengthening of support from some donors in areas associated with democracy and the media.

There is complementarity between EUD instruments and those of other donors. For example, the SDC-funded Civic Mobilias focuses on operational/ institutional support to CSOs as its main instrument. In its latest Citizen Engagement Programme (CEP), USAID has also targeted support to thematic networks as one of its core priorities, adding value to EUD support. These are the only two larger donors active in providing support to civil society during the period being evaluated.

The EUD has utilized the Local Advisory Group established under the TACSO project to ensure distribution of information on its programming priorities, and the defined objectives of Calls for Proposals, but this has not gone beyond informal donor coordination/ information-sharing.

- A more structured coordination on funding priorities and Calls has taken place with EU Member States;
- There are embassies providing bilateral support to CSO activities, such as the Dutch and the British, but these contributions are mainly focused on specific sectors. More recently, with the political crisis, some donors have geared up their support to more democracy-oriented activities and a focus on media freedoms;
- Due to the small numbers of donors present in the country, each has integrated and adapted its programme to the EUD's approach, so there is little overlap and duplication;
- CSOs/ project beneficiaries have used other donor assistance as a basic source for their co-financing contribution (e.g. media support from EUD scheme and Dutch support);
- Due to the existence of only partial data on state and local support to CSOs, coordination with public institutions (especially the Unit for Cooperation with NGOs in the General Secretariat of the Government) is not effective.

Relevance - Project Level

4. To what extent has the use of the financial assistance to civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey been consistent with the objectives of the EU's support to civil society within the Enlargement Strategy?

The Guidelines, with defined targets to be achieved by 2020, provide a comprehensive frame, and have driven the programming of CSF assistance in the country since 2013-2014, in achieving long-term goals. However, the Guideline's targets are not yet fully integrated in the overall and country programming frame.

- A best practice might be provided from the Media component of the CSF programme, where funded projects are requested to ensure alignment between their logframes/ project logic and EU Media Guidelines, which would enable the direct monitoring of CSF project contributions to the achieving the 2020 country targets;
- All CfPs (specific lots/ priorities) have allowed space for CSOs/ beneficiaries to provide for interventions linked to the main objectives and results of the EU civil society Guidelines, with a domination of focus on objectives related to "Changing relations with Government", in the context of a conducive environment;

Responses

- While the drafting of both Guidelines has been an inclusive and multi-stakeholder process, including consultations, negotiations, conferences and discussions, many CSOs/ beneficiaries have low level of awareness and comprehension of the document and consider the Guidelines to be an 'expert, bureaucratic' document.
- One missing component of the Guidelines is the official character and political support that would contribute to better outputs and impact of CSF-funded projects. The Guidelines provide a first-ever, comprehensive civil society framework (inspiration, roadmap, game-changer) for both political and financial assistance, and in this respect provide for a structural and institutional set-up that, if in place, would contribute to the implementation of the democratic principles enshrined in the Copenhagen criteria (s.c. Civil Society Acquis);
- The EUD anticipates that the EU Media Guidelines will provide a roadmap for comprehensive reforms to be undertaken in the media sector upon formation of the new Government. One of main identified challenges is the continued monitoring of the Guidelines and related reforms. There is room for further development of monitoring approaches that provide useful and credible feedback that will feed into concrete recommendations;
- Not all objectives of the EU Media Guidelines are being covered/ targeted by CSF-funded projects.

5. To what extent does the financial assistance respond to the specific needs of civil society in the targeted sectors?

The aims, objectives and activities of the projects funded by the CSF's financial assistance in the country are closely aligned to the overall objectives of the CSF. CSOs, in delivering their projects, contribute to CSF objectives and to the overall objectives of the EC in relation to civil society development.

- CSO/CSF beneficiaries are continuously consulted on funding priorities and instruments both at programme and project level;
- The post-2011 support introduced a new approach, which responded to some of the main structural shortcomings of civil society in the country: cooperation on thematic areas and strengthening of grassroots/ local CSOs. In this way, the support was comprised of support to thematic/ issue-devoted networks with a combination of a sub-granting scheme;
- Thematically, the assistance has included a wide-range of sector and thematic areas
 - (2012-3 allocation): Environment; Social inclusion; Socio-economic development; Human rights; Transparency/good governance,
 - (2014, 2015 allocations): Public procurement, budget expenditure and execution; Public employment; Access to information and regulatory impact assessment; Quality of public services; Rights of the child; Combating different forms and manifestations of discrimination; Enhanced/ Improved understanding and tolerance of the LGBTI community,
 - Media and freedom of expression support (since 2014-5 allocation): Enabling media environment; Capacity-building to regulatory environment, including self-regulator of the journalists; support to media related initiatives. Promoting improved inter-community relations for: Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA);
 - Improving inter-community relations.
- Funding provided through TACSO, as a CSF component, responds in a focused way to the needs of CSOs in the country, particularly in assisting with a general improvement in approach and practice.

Responses
Efficiency
6. To what extent has the provided financial assistance reached grassroots and community-based organizations?
<p>The current CSF frameworks in the country require all supported project to include a sub-granting scheme, with the specific intent of improving the reach of CSF grants towards grassroots and community-based organisations and the geographical spread of CSF funding. The sub-granting scheme has facilitated considerable networking and sharing of know-how between more and less developed CSOs and in (sectoral) networking, but it has so far had a limited reach to grassroots and community-based organizations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirements for the mandated sub-granting schemes have changed during the period under review, with the intention of the changes towards the provision of larger and longer-term sub-grants. The initial amounts ran from 3,000-5,000 EUR and 3-4 month projects, while the current framework is for grants up to 10,000 EUR grants for up to 12 months support; • The sub-granting schemes have contributed the effect expected by the EUD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ They have enabled stronger capacity-building (especially in terms of research and advocacy), with a noted enhancement of larger CSOs/ lead beneficiaries in managing of grant schemes. ○ There is a growing number of thematic/ sectoral networks. Change for these networks is also visible in their outreach and promotion. One important aspect of the new approach has been a more likely sustainability of these networks – beneficiary networks of the first CfP have not demonstrated sustainability – attributed in no small part to the short period of the grants and the lack of any follow-up funding. This is true of the Citizens Spoils of Conflict network and the Citizen Budget Monitoring at the Local Level network. • Further, there is a noted benefit to the ‘granting’ organisation, where they are open to having their views shaped by their sub-grantee partners on issues. • The management and administrative burden, and the potential financial risks for CSOs who take on the lead beneficiary role for CSF grants are a heavy burden, particularly in terms of the human resources required to manage sub-grant schemes and the relatively low level of compensation (maximum of 30% of the total project budget). There is a noted need in this context for the CSF to provide administration/ finance training for grantee organisations, so they are better prepared to fulfil their obligations; • The 10% co-financing requirement is a challenge for CSF beneficiaries across the board, and especially due to the limited options available to CSOs to address these requirements. Further, the synchronising of all requirements is an area of difficulty for sub-grantees; • The sub-granting has allowed for a widening of the number of supported organisations, and in many cases has reached CSOs outside of Skopje; • For many CSO/CSF lead beneficiaries, the management and administrative burden as well as potential financial risks involved (they vouch for the sub-grant support in front of EUD) of sub-grant schemes is reported as heavy on human resources which are not compensated within financial cost incurred within the allowed budget limits (maximum 30% of the total project); • The requirement to separately register each (sub-)grant for VAT exemption, in the Central Donor Assistance Database (CDAD) in the Sector for European Affairs (SEA), presents an administrative burden for sub-grantees and has in many cases delayed the start and implementation of projects. There have been reported cases of CSOs that have not registered, for fear of jeopardising the timely implementation of a project;

Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several CSOs have used the sub-grants as an alternative way to sustain minimum activities and outputs from previously implemented CSF projects, from both national and regional/ multi-beneficiary components. While this contributes to sustainability of the CSF outputs and outcomes, it also points to a gap, where a number of capable, middle-sized CSOs, not being able to manage an EU-funded project as they have been marginalised with the focus on sub-granting schemes; The main strength of the sub-grant scheme in media projects has not been the focus on reaching the grassroots, but rather towards capacity-building of investigative journalists and strengthening journalist standards, as well as the funding of concrete media outputs.
<p>7. To what extent has the EUD used an appropriate mix of funding instruments to reach the stated objectives of CSF support?</p> <p>As noted above, the current framework of the CSF in the country is completely focused on action grants with a sub-granting component targeted at improved sectoral cooperation between CSO actors. Indeed, the only type of grant provided through the CSF in the country has been action grants, although a) they have included the sub-granting focus and b) they have grown in length, so there is a mix in this sense.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The action grant instrument was the only instrument used in the evaluated period, with focus on supporting development of sectorial CSO networks and their reach (via sub-granting schemes); The extended length from 15/18 months to 36/37-month projects support has considerably facilitated the prospects for development and sustainability of project outputs, including network consolidation and the prospect to continue their work; The thematic focus has, by and large, balanced between adjusting assistance to the concrete needs of the wide-ranging themes CSOs focus on, and the changing conditions in the policy environment while maintaining a basic focus on EU Acquis related areas. Some areas such as the environment are reported as under-represented, or having too little support; Sectoral networks have different levels of capacity and maturity, targeted assistance is appropriate to optimise their capacity strengthening, outputs and influence - operating grants could be worth consideration in this area; Many CSF beneficiaries apply similar or same PRAG requirements for sub-grantees, not adapted to the needs and capacities of grass-root/community-based organizations. The main reasons reported for this are: application requirements, administrative burden, low-level of capacity, financial requirements (min. ability for pre-financing).
<p>8. To what extent is the provided financial assistance flexible enough to respond to changing needs?</p> <p>There has been a learning curve, both on the side of the EUD and CSOs/CSF beneficiaries in terms of the needed length of projects and benefits and limits of the network plus sub-granting approach. It will be important in future programming cycles to further utilise what has been learned, on all sides, in this process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The financial and administrative burden still poses considerable challenges to all types of CSOs /CSF beneficiaries, and further measures are needed to assist CSOs in overcoming these challenges, especially as many of them are outside of the control or influence of these CSOs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financially, the risk involved on behalf of partners and sub-grantees, and the co-financing requirements, are limiting the access of some CSOs to the benefits of funding from the CSF.

Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Administratively, the VAT reimbursement procedure has been reported to be as long as 2-3 months in most cases, as compared to previously when the reimbursement took only up to 14 days. In some cases, the procedures have delayed project implementation, and it does present a serious obstacle for sub-granting projects, which are usually of a shorter time frame. ● CSOs/ CSF beneficiaries reported different experience in negotiating the project length and budget revisions, prior to signing grant contracts, and a slow responsiveness of EUD staff to requests for clarification and for approvals of budget changes/ amendments, but the overall effort of relevant EUD staff to meet the needs of CSOs is recognised and appreciated by beneficiaries; ● Eligibility criteria, which in certain situations blocks participation of CSOs in more than one project at a time, are not well-understood nor supported by CSOs.
Effectiveness
9. To what extent is the financial assistance contributing to addressing the needs and priorities of the civil society sector? (Focus on civil society.)
<p>The main contribution of the CSF has been in strengthening sectoral/ thematic cooperation, and the consolidation of the research and advocacy capacity of CSO, particularly in areas related to the EU acquis and fundamental rights. In the areas of media freedoms, the CSF has contributed to sustaining minimum investigative journalism capacity, and standards and awareness on media freedoms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A key focus of the CSF is directly related to the enabling environment (improvements to the tax framework, diversification of financing sources, grassroots activism). ● A further key focus is the fulfilment of the objectives of the EU's CS Guidelines. ● The key areas of capacity-building, and developmental needs, have been addressed horizontally (either as part of project activities or TACSO initiatives); ● Finally, the CSF has contributed to an extended outreach to grassroots and community-based/ local CSOs, including outside of Skopje, via the sub-granting and network approach, although a further simplification and targeting is required in order to reach deeper down to grassroots and community-based organizations; ● One area of difficulty for the CSF, and outside of its control, is the lack of political commitment, on the part of the Government, to the the EU's CS Guidelines in the period, which have not been translated effectively into Government measures. This same is true of the Government Strategy for Cooperation with NGOs, 2012-2017, which includes key structural measures which have not been implemented.
10. To what extent is the financial assistance contributing to achievement of CSF's stated strategic objectives and priorities? (Focus on the CSF itself.)
<p>There are a number of areas in which the CSF's financial assistance is contributing to the achievement of the CSF's strategic objectives – these include dialogue with public institutions, sectoral networks, CSO-media cooperation and sectoral priorities in the Accession agenda. Still, they fall short of being effective due to closed and uncooperative institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The contribution of the CSF, in terms of <i>improving dialogue with public institutions</i>, via for example concrete legislative proposals (e.g. the Law on Discrimination) was visible in the initial period, but the growing closed nature of institutions during the period being evaluated undermined project

Responses
<p>outcomes, and in particular the CSF's contribution to legislative proposals, development of sectoral . Nevertheless, CSOs/ CSF beneficiaries report an improved level of cooperation with local institutions in the same period;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assistance geared towards sectoral networks, as well as support to <i>fostering CSO/ media cooperation</i> (via priorities related to media freedom), has contributed to <i>enhanced accountability and credibility of the sector vis-à-vis</i> the citizens and public institutions, and has also maximised the <i>transfer of knowledge and experience</i> between more and less developed CSOs (big-help-small principle) as well as CSOs in different beneficiary countries; • Most concretely, the assistance has been maximised in capacitating CSOs to <i>work together on sectoral priorities and the EU Acquis related agenda</i> (e.g. Network 23, the Citizens Spoils of Conflict network, the Citizen Budget Monitoring at Local Level network, the IPA2CSO mechanism);
<p>11. To what extent are the different implementation instruments effective in providing support to civil society?</p> <p>During the period under review, only the action grant (short and long-term) instrument has been used by the CSF in the country, with variations in length of support and with the current focus on sub-granting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only the action grant instrument has been used in the period being evaluated. The action grant instrument has involved short-term (15 18 month grants in the period 2011-2013 and longer-term grants (30-37 months) in the period 2014-2016; • The sub-granting scheme has grown from the initial 3,000-5,000 EUR and 3-4 months projects to 10,000 EUR grants for up to 12 months support (or in total range between 80,000 to 100,000 EUR per project); • Twinning to the Government (Unit for Cooperation with NGOs) was planned as a part of IPA I bilateral support), but is being implemented only in 2017 as twinning-light due to the absence of political will and the lack of progress on the implementation of the Government Strategy for Cooperation with CSOs; • Most projects have had similar duration and timeframes; • The Calls have a mandatory requirement that the lead beneficiary is a local CSO or a foreign based (EU Member State) CSO with a locally-registered office with the aim of sustaining capacity at the local level once the project ends. Projects including foreign CSOs have had good components of knowledge transfer - methodologies and other skills - to local CSOs or direct beneficiaries (e.g. journalists); • Thematically, the grant support has been diverse, including CSO sectoral priorities and priorities deriving from the Accession agenda (PAR, anti-corruption, good governance, rule of law). Within the EUD there is a focus on intra-project synergies to encourage project effectiveness.
<p>Impact</p> <p>12. What have been the impacts of the CSF to date?</p> <p>Impact prospects of CSF funding in the country are mixed, and depend to a large degree on external factors. At the project level, some impacts are more visible, and there is reason to think that the sectoral networks have the real possibility of having a longer-term impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main impact of the CSF to date has been in improving sectorial cooperation between CSOs, and supporting the development and capacities in networks (especially in research and advocacy) in the area of the s.c. Copenhagen Political Criteria and EU Acquis; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Networks also note a greater visibility in the society.

Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assistance of the CSF has also contributed to organisational capacities, developing stronger, more professional organisations, with a more positive influence (and visibility) in the society; • The developing of an understanding of the requirements for the enabling environment for civil society development, which has helped push the agenda with public institutions has been a positive impact. • However, at the same time non-cooperative and closed institutions have provided the main constraints to the impact of the CSF assistance in the country, and particularly in terms of the enabling environment. • Another constraint on impact is the simple need for on-going funding while organisations develop the knowledge, skills and profile needed to build a sustainable operation.
<p>13. Are regional networks funded through the CSF effectively advocating for policy reforms in the Western Balkans and Turkey?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A full discussion about regional networks can be found in the Multi-beneficiary and Regional Project Evaluation Matrix, at Annex/ Appendix 9. • From their own experience in and with regional networks, CSOs in the country point to a number of areas of value from the regional networks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Exchanges of best practice; ➢ Development of organisational capacities; ➢ A greater strength inherent in a regional network when compared with a national CSO.; ➢ Similarity of problems, issues, and therefore possibility for developing similar approaches.
<p>14. What factors are there, which contribute to or hamper impact?</p>
<p>The single most important factor hampering impact from CSF-funded initiatives is the political situation. CSF impacts are strongly dependent on the extent to which the institutional environment, for support to civil society, is and continues to be strong.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The political situation is noted in three particular ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ The politicisation and stigmatisation of CSOs/beneficiaries as well as direct attacks in the 2016-2017 (i.e. financial inspections); ➢ The lack of political commitment to ensuring the implementation of the enabling environment; ➢ Non-cooperative institutions. • The difficulty of CSF financial and administrative requirements has some dampening effect on the potential for impact from CSF funded initiatives, as do the related co-financing requirements, that dampen enthusiasm for participation from some CSOs. Inconsistent funding for organisations creates uncertainty, and the significant expenditure of energy on fundraising, and on complying with donor requirements. • Finally, a more proactive (political) EUD/ EC, in support of the role and specific positions relevant to CSF outcomes and projects is needed for a greater impact from CSF funding, particularly in relation to government engagement and support.
<p>Sustainability</p>
<p>15. To what extent are the impacts noted to date sustainable and likely to continue producing effects after the end of CSF assistance?</p>
<p>The sustainability of the CSF actions in the country remain fragile; many of the actions financed by the CSF face difficulties in producing effects after project finalisation.</p>

Responses
<p>Some particular aspects of sustainability prospects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the current approach, to support cooperation and networks/ networking has provided for better sustainability prospects, it is noted that many of the first-generation CSF projects could have had better sustainability prospects if linked into an FPA (2+2) support; • In cases where cooperation and networking existed prior to a project starting, sustainability is more likely; • The current increase in project timeframes is likely to improve sustainability of outputs and outcomes, but this needs to be monitored and tested over time.
Cross-cutting Issues (gender and human rights)
16. Is there a sufficient and effective focus in CSF funding on human rights and gender equality?
<p>The focus on human rights in the CSF for the country is strong. However, focus on gender seems to be more formal than essential.</p> <p>Further:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights (as part of Fundamental Freedoms) have been thematic priorities in CfPs and there have been concrete projects supported within the CSF in the area; • Mainstreaming of human rights issues, such as gender, is present in most CSF projects, but in very basic (quantitative) senses (e.g. number of women and men attending certain activities). • There is an expressed view that this declarative, rather than substantial approach to gender equality is because CSOs do not know how to mainstream gender, and that assistance in this area, from the CSF generally, or through TACSO would be of benefit to the community, CSOs and CSF outcomes.
Environment
17. Is there a sufficient and effective focus in CSF guidelines on the environment?
<p>Environment has been a thematic priority in CfPs, and there have been concrete (3) projects supported within the CSF in the area, although a stronger focus on environment, in thematic areas and as a cross-cutting area, is warranted.</p>
Coherence, Coordination and Consistency
18. To what extent are the different national and regional actions of the CSF programme coherent/ complementing/ overlapping?
<p>There is a clear complementarity in the work of the CSF with EIDHR, although areas of potential overlap are noted. In its ‘support to democratic processes’, the EIDHR has a specific focus on ‘<i>cooperation between civil society and local authorities and relevant state institutions</i>’, which, while complementary to the CSF, can be seen also as potentially overlapping with the CSF’s objectives with public authorities, and advocacy in support of democratic issues and participation in the democratic process. The CSF focus on social inclusion, anti-discrimination and gender complement EIDHR priorities, but also can overlap with the EIDHR’s strong emphasis on vulnerable groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to lack of transparency and accountability of state funding for CSOs (via state budget and lottery proceeds) full coherence and complementarity with state support was not possible also at least minimum level (e.g. use of state support to help in 10% co-financing requirement). • There are issues related to coherence to be addressed across/ within the CSF. These issues are visible in a number of ways:

Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is a lack of consistency between EUDs and between EUDs and DG NEAR in the frameworks of Calls. While not strictly speaking a ‘problem’, this lack of consistency is indicative of a lack of coherent direction; ➤ EUDs do not know enough about MBs, generally and in their country. There is a related lack of correlation in the responses provided by EUDs and DG NEAR to questions from funded organisations.; <p>There is not enough learning across EUDs and up to DG NEAR, particularly in relation to successful approaches and strategies.</p>
<p>19. To what extent do supported projects ensure fulfilment of the visibility strategy set by the European Commission?</p> <p>CSF projects follow EU visibility requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No issues were reported with applying EU visibility rules; • Visibility (and link to constituencies, citizenry) by CSOs/CSF beneficiaries is weak and the EUD has targeted this with a requirement of 2% of budget (around 10,000 EUR) set aside for visibility, putting in place a small framework contract for helping projects write a communication strategy, support the improvement of visibility. Experts are also asked to look for synergies within priorities, and between projects. This should help strengthen the communication of project outcomes and contribute to better visibility in the future.
<p style="background-color: #FFCCBC; padding: 2px;">Added Value</p> <p>20. What value is added to the work and initiatives of beneficiary countries compared to that which might be achieved without the contributions of the CSF?</p> <p>Given the political and social context of this evaluation, the main added-value of CSF has been in enabling and strengthening sectoral cooperation in key governance and EU Acquis related areas as well as developing factual research and advocacy basis for CSOs to point to structural challenges under sectoral policies and key processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to a lack of funding sources, many of the sectoral networking, strategies and research outputs would not be developed without the CSF funding; • Many CSOs/ CSF beneficiaries have, through CSF projects, provided the vital research on structural challenges faced in key democratic processes (fight against corruption, transparency, open policy and decision-making processes). They were unable to push forward, due to unresponsive institutions (or state capture) and their public shaming. This vital work enables CSOs to be mobilised, and to articulate concrete proposals on how to address these specific issues. A good example of this is the <i>Blueprint for Urgent Reform Priorities</i>, as well as other sectoral documents that have been created.

7.6.5 Lessons Learned

- Programming efficiency that improves prospects of meeting objectives.
 - Monitoring and evaluation processes are important for project effectiveness, and contribute strongly to planning processes for subsequent or follow-up initiatives, particularly where projects are of a longer duration: 3 plus years.
 - The sharing of evaluation reports on specific projects, or ‘landmark’ projects, would be of value across the CSF.

- Longer term support is important – and has contributed to effectiveness.
- Improvements to the reach of the CSF to grassroots organisations.
 - There is a need to address the ‘CSO vs. citizen’ question – i.e., CSO vs. civil society. The current focus is on CSOs, not on civil society per se. One particular aspect of this is to explore the potential for support to ‘movements’ and non-formal citizens initiatives.
- Improvements in interactions between civil society and government/public authorities.
 - In terms of lessons learned, the following quote from one funded organisation is particularly illuminating: ‘There is a lot of focus on generic issues related to the enabling environment, but I am not sure what has been actually done in this regard. We’ve implemented a landmark project with the CSF, and done as much as we could and more. We wonder if it is because of the circumstance here that engagement with authorities makes it difficult or even impossible for the engagement to happen. It is very difficult, and maybe there is just pretence of engagement. We have tried with certain bodies, and it has been quite difficult.’

7.6.6 Conclusions

Relevance

CSF financial assistance is relevant for civil society and country support in the country. The CSF objectives and priorities were generally aligned with the EU CS Guidelines and consistent with the EC Enlargement Strategy for the region and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In the framework of the three Calls for Proposals (allocations 2012-3, 2014, 2015), stated objectives followed the identified setbacks in the general (enabling) environment in which civil society operates in the country, as well as the specific sector (also EU-acquis related) issues. Here, the media component became an important part of the support, in the 2014 allocation, as did support to the inter-communal relations/ multiculturalism/ Ohrid Framework Agreement, also as part of the Accession Partnership requirements for the country.

While the objectives and indicators are translated and coherent with the Government Strategy for Cooperation with NGOs, 2012-2017, they are re-defined in a very broad way, rendering it difficult to follow-up, monitor and evaluate as well as benchmark and assess on result achievement (performance as per the EU’s Results Framework) of the Instrument as a whole, and of the individual projects it has funded.

The presence of donors in the country other than the EU is limited. The recent political crisis has encouraged a strengthening of support from some donors in areas associated with democracy and the media. The Guidelines, with defined targets to be achieved by 2020, provide a comprehensive frame, and have driven the programming of CSF assistance in the country since 2013-2014, in achieving long-term goals. However, the Guideline’s targets are not yet fully integrated in the overall and the country programming frame.

Efficiency

CSF financial assistance has been efficient in supporting sectorial networking, esp. in EU-Acquis areas, but with limited reach to grass-root and community-based organizations. The current CSF frameworks in the country require all supported project to include a sub-granting scheme, with the specific

intent of improving the reach of CSF grants towards grassroots and community-based organisations and the geographical spread of CSF funding. The sub-granting scheme has facilitated considerable networking and sharing of know-how between more and less developed CSOs and in (sectoral) networking, but it has so far had a limited reach to grassroots and community-based organizations. There has been a learning curve, both on the side of the EUD and CSOs/CSF beneficiaries in terms of the needed length of projects and benefits and limits of the network plus sub-granting approach. It will be important in future programming cycles to further utilise what has been learned, on all sides, in this process.

Effectiveness

CSF assistance achieved considerable sectoral and thematic cooperation among CSOs, but limited outcomes due to closed and uncooperative institutions. The main contribution of the CSF has been in strengthening sectoral/ thematic cooperation, and the consolidation of the research and advocacy capacity of CSO, particularly in areas related to the EU acquis and fundamental rights. In the areas of media freedoms, the CSF has contributed to sustaining minimum investigative journalism capacity, and standards and awareness on media freedoms. There are a number of areas in which the CSF's financial assistance is contributing to the achievement of the CSF's strategic objectives – these include dialogue with public institutions, sectoral networks, CSO-media cooperation and sectoral priorities in the Accession agenda. Still, they fall short of being effective due to closed and uncooperative institutions. During the period under review, only the action grant (short and long-term) instrument has been used by the CSF in the country, with variations in length of support and with the current focus on sub-granting.

Impact

Impact prospects of CSF funding in the country are mixed, and depend to a large degree on external factors. At the project level, some impacts are more visible, and there is reason to think that the sectoral networks have the real possibility of having a longer-term impact. The single most important factor hampering impact from CSF-funded initiatives is the political situation. CSF impacts are strongly dependent on the extent to which the institutional environment, for support to civil society, is and continues to be strong.

Sustainability

The sustainability of the CSF actions in the country remain fragile; many of the actions financed by the CSF face difficulties in producing effects after project finalisation. Sequencing and long-term support was introduced gradually and this has limited some of the sectoral cooperation to grown from project to network(ing).

Cross-cutting

The focus on human rights in the CSF for the country is strong. However, focus on gender seems to be more formal than essential. Environment has been a thematic priority in CfPs, and there have been concrete (3) projects supported within the CSF in the area, although a stronger focus on environment, in thematic areas and as a cross-cutting area, is warranted.

Coherence

There is a clear complementarity in the work of the CSF with EIDHR, although areas of potential overlap are noted. In its 'support to democratic processes', the EIDHR has a specific focus on 'cooperation between civil society and local authorities and relevant state institutions', which, while complementary to the CSF, can be seen also as potentially overlapping with the CSF's objectives with public authorities, and advocacy in support of democratic issues and participation in the democratic process. The CSF focus on social inclusion, anti-discrimination and gender complement EIDHR priorities, but also can overlap with the EIDHR's strong emphasis on vulnerable groups.

Visibility

CSF projects follow EU visibility requirements.

7.6.7 Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the EUD, together with DG NEAR, improve monitoring and evaluation of the CSF through the introduction of SMART indicators at all levels of results. Further, it is recommended that the EUD initiate project evaluations, particularly where projects are larger, and/ or longer.
2. It is recommended that the EUD further improve coherence of the CSF through support to sectoral policies and strategies currently being supported via other EU programmes/ projects, with the intent of increasing the effects and impact of CSF assistance.
3. It is recommended that the EUD perform an evaluation of supported sectoral networks, as the basis for defining network specific instruments of support, based on their maturity, scope and performance. Within this framework, the EUD should consider moving towards operational grants for mature and developed sectoral networks, especially those in key EU Acquis and Copenhagen areas. Consideration of sequencing of support is also appropriate.
4. It is recommended that the EUD consider introduction of a diversified approach, via a specific Call for Proposals, that will focus on deepening the reach of the CSF to more grassroots and community-based organisations, with a focus on addressing their specific needs. Specific consideration for a greater emphasis on flexibility, and a 'lighter' eligibility criteria is encouraged.
5. It is recommended that the EUD participate in actions that directly assist the speeding up of the VAT registration process, and assist in the introduction of co-financing of CSF projects from public funding.
6. It is recommended that the EUD, together with other EUDs in the region, and DG NEAR, introduce a revised approach to developing effective visibility approaches for supported actions. Some planning for these visibility processes will need to take place at the regional level (to be then implemented by funded organisations), and some will be the direct responsibility of funded organisations.
7. It is recommended that the EUD engage in a process with DG NEAR and other EUDs, to further develop requirements and frameworks for the inclusion of human rights and gender as cross-cutting themes. A specific focus of this recommendations is to develop particular assistance for CSOs, to ensure they understand both the intent of, and the potential outcomes of this focus.

7.7 Annex/ Appendix 7 – Evaluation Matrix Montenegro

7.7.1 Fieldwork Implementation and Montenegro Portfolio

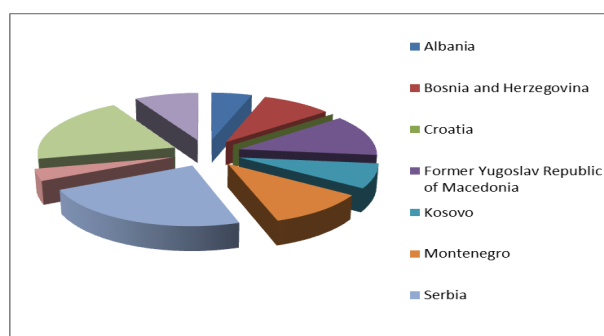
The evaluation fieldwork in Montenegro was implemented from 15 to 19 May 2017 by two evaluation team members, and covered all the projects listed in the Montenegro sample. It also comprised briefing and debriefing meetings with the EUD, and several meetings with both the Government and civil society actors involved in horizontal issues of civil society – Government dialogue, coordination and cooperation.

7.7.2 Overall Portfolio

The overall structure of the total CSF portfolio 2011 – 2016 covered by the evaluation is shown below, as presented in the Inception Report (source: current CSF database).

Geographical Focus	Number of Contracts	Total EU Budget
Albania	19	EUR 6,087,544
BiH	33	EUR 12,912,470
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	45	EUR 9,911,482
Kosovo	27	EUR 8,544,842
Montenegro	39	EUR 6,688,387
Serbia	84	EUR 12,600,920
Turkey	13	EUR 11,058,604
WB and Turkey ⁴⁹	29	EUR 27,960,887
Multi-beneficiary ⁵⁰	73	EUR 35,055,931
Total	362	EUR 130,821,066

The breakdown of projects shows a relatively high share of Serbia (84 projects), followed by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (45) and Montenegro (39) and a considerably smaller number of projects in Turkey (13). It has nevertheless to be noted that the average EU budget of the projects in Turkey is considerably higher than the overall average. The multi-beneficiary (multi-country and WBT) projects represent a significant share of the total (102).



The CSF portfolio of national projects funded in Montenegro in the 2011 – 2016 period has had the following structure by theme (total and average budget figures in Euros):

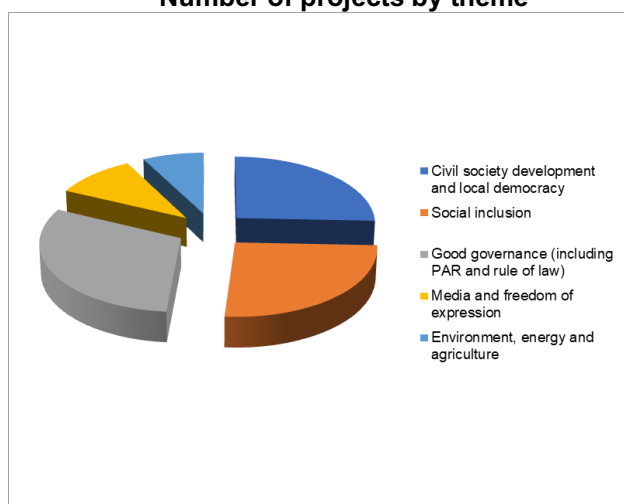
⁴⁹ This description is for contracts/ projects which focus on ALL countries in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

⁵⁰ This description is for contracts/ projects which focus on more than one beneficiary country (but NOT all countries).

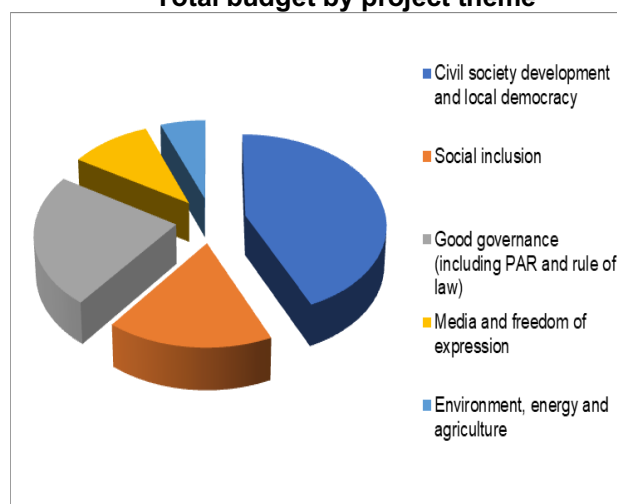
Breakdown of National Projects in Montenegro by Theme	Number	Budget	Average
Civil society development and local democracy	10	3 571 404	357 140
Social inclusion	10	1 404 752	140 475
Good governance (including PAR and rule of law)	12	1 940 291	161 691
Media and freedom of expression	4	856 998	214 250
Environment, energy and agriculture	3	474 297	158 099
TOTAL	39	8 247 743	211 481

This structure is illustrated in the charts below:

Number of projects by theme



Total budget by project theme



The national projects selected for the Montenegro sample are listed below; it is noted that all the projects in the sample (and, for that matter in the long list of all Montenegro national projects) belong to the implementation instrument of action grants, except for the technical assistance project N° 373104.

MONTENEGRO SAMPLE OF NATIONAL PROJECTS

	Contract Number	Title	Amount (EUR)	Theme
1	306400	Open Mind – Organisation of the Participation in Enlarged Networks: Montenegro is Inclusive, Not Discriminatory	176 842,95	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth
2	306435	Local coalitions for community development	158 400,00	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)
3	345136	De facto strong	191 999,55	Civil society development and local democracy
4	345161	Speed up ! Enhance the role of CSO in Montenegrin social policies development and implementation	129 512,00	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth
5	346860	Judicial Reform Monitoring	113 057,56	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)
6	371015	Social Entrepreneurship: a step towards Independence	175 000,00	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth
7	373104	Technical cooperation for the development of institutional mechanisms for the cooperation between the government and non governmental organisations in Montenegro	519 000,00	Civil society development and local democracy
8	374391	Health Up - Contribution of civil society to strengthening partnership dialogue and cooperation between non-governmental and governmental sector in the health system	130 785,00	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)
		Average budget per project 191 911	1 594 597	

This evaluation of national projects in Montenegro covers 23% of the total number of national projects funded under CSF in the 2011-2016 period, Out of 8 national projects in the sample, 3 belong to the field of Good Governance (38%), 4 to the field of social insertion (50%) and 1 to the civil society development (12%). In addition, the evaluation in Montenegro also covered a multi-beneficiary Project ARYSE (At Risk Youth Social Empowerment, Contract N° 370628), managed by a CSO based in Montenegro.

7.7.3 Evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations in Montenegro

The evaluation findings presented in the country annexes are placed within the approved evaluation matrix and thus all follow the same sequence:

Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Relevance – programming level	EQ 1 – EQ 3
Relevance – project level	EQ 4 – EQ 5
Efficiency	EQ 6 – EQ 8
Effectiveness	EQ 9 – EQ 11
Impact	EQ 12 – EQ 14
Sustainability	EQ 15
Cross-cutting Issues – Gender and Human Rights	EQ 16
Cross-cutting issues - Environment	EQ 17
Coherence, coordination and consistency	EQ 18 – EQ 19
Added Value	EQ 20
Lessons Learnt	EQ 21

The projects cited as examples in the Montenegro findings are number from 1 to 8, corresponding to their number in the sample list above (the Project N° 9 is covered by the assessment of the multi-beneficiary projects).

The findings are followed by a synthesis in form of conclusions and recommendations. It is underlined that the findings and conclusions solely refer to Montenegro and are not to be taken as general ones, on the level of CSF as a whole.

The same goes for the recommendations, which are limited to these that are specific for Montenegro and which do not cover any issue already tackled in the general recommendations, concerning the CSF as a whole.

7.7.4 Responses to evaluation questions from the perspective of Montenegro projects

Responses
Relevance – Programming Level
1. To what extent are the defined objectives of the CSF relevant?
<p>As in all other IPA countries, the retained CSF Objectives are fully consistent with regard to the EU enlargement strategy. More particularly, the 2016 EU Montenegro in the frame of the 2016 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy⁵¹, states that “some progress was made in improving cooperation between the government and civil society organisations (CSOs). Civil society’s active role in the accession process is now formally acknowledged, but full participation remains to be achieved. Additional resources and transparency are needed in government structures and procedures for collaboration with and consultation of CSOs. It is a matter of concern that smear campaigns and intimidation attempts continued against certain CSO activists. Conditions conducive to voluntary work, civic activism and social entrepreneurship need to be created” (page 9).</p> <p>Furthermore, the EU’s Country Strategy Paper 2014-2020 for Montenegro⁵² underlines, among others, that “in a participatory democracy, an effective public administration needs to be complemented by well-developed and active civil society organisations, as well as independent and professional media. CSOs and social partners can make a substantial contribution to addressing many of these issues through their lobbying, advocacy and oversight activities at national and local level in every sector. They can create demand for enhanced transparency, accountability and effectiveness of public institutions and facilitate a greater focus on the needs of citizens in policy-making. Citizen participation can be fostered through e-government and inclusion. The involvement of civil society in the pre-accession process can contribute to deepening citizens' understanding of the reforms Montenegro needs to complete in order to qualify for EU membership (pp. 13-14).</p> <p>The specific objective of CSF for Montenegro⁵³ is fully aligned with these strategic orientations, and target in particular (CSF CfP 2016), to build the capacity of CSOs to be professional, effective and accountable independent actors, with the following priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower and develop capacities of CSOs; • Increase the government's response to CSOs needs, and • Improve the level of participation of CSOs in policy-making process <p>It can nevertheless be observed that the priority of increasing the government’s response to CSOs needs has been more difficult to attain, taking into consideration the centralized management of CSF, which has not been subject to any preparatory consultation and implementation follow up with the Government.</p>

⁵¹ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2016/20161109_report_montenegro.pdf

⁵² https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2014/20140919-csp-montenegro.pdf

⁵³ <http://www.delme.ec.europa.eu/code/navigate.php?id=1626>

It can be therefore considered that CSF has offered an appropriate alignment with civil society needs but would need to adjust its specific objectives and priorities further in order to ensure better response to the particular constraints and needs of the MNE CS, a significant share of which is directly related to absence of a legal and institution framework that results in lack of or a poor dialogue between civil society and the Government.

2. To what extent are objectives at different levels (strategic, MIPDs and programmes) clear, measurable and realistic?

On the Montenegro level, CSF Objectives are generally taken clearly and realistically and its priorities are well aligned with the crucial needs of the civil society in the country – capacity building, dialogue with the State and empowerment. However, they need further elaboration in order to render them measurable, including introduction of SMART indicators, at all levels. This should be reflected in the CSF programming documents, in its future database and, more explicitly, in the conditions of its tenders (service contracts) and calls for proposals (grant contracts).

There is no systematic presence of intervention logic parameters and indicators, which renders follow-up, monitoring and evaluations more difficult and does not allow for any benchmarking and assessments on results' achievement (performance as per the EU's Results Framework) of the Instrument as a whole and of the individual projects it has funded.

3. To what extent does programming take adequate and relevant account of assistance provided and reforms promoted by other (key) donors? (also pertinent to discussions of coordination/ complementarity)

Donor coordination is in place in Montenegro but it is important to underline two points:

- This coordination has gradually lost its full relevance, due to the fact that most of important international donors have substantially reduced or fully closed down their support to civil society in the country;
- Since the CSF is a centrally managed EU instrument to support civil society (similar to EIDHR), the question of its complementarity with national funds cannot be fully responded to, in the absence of any evidence of coordination between the EU and the Government.

One can nevertheless consider that the overall coherence and complementarity have been maintained, something that should be subject to further reinforcement, in particular as concerns the complementarity between EU and national funding.

Relevance - Project Level

4. To what extent has the use of the financial assistance to civil society in Montenegro been consistent with the objectives of the EU's support to civil society within the Enlargement Strategy?

The alignment is present in all the relevant aspects: the Copenhagen Criteria, the Guidelines for EU support to CS, and the 2014-2020 EU strategy (see EQ 1). This overall coherence is not different in Montenegro from what has been observed in other IPA countries, and in the multi-beneficiary and regional IPA component of CSF.

As can be seen from the Montenegro share of national CSF-funded projects, over 50% (20 projects) are in the fields of social inclusion, civil society development and local development, and over 25% (12 projects) are in the field of good governance. The share of the projects in support of the media (10% or 4 projects) may appear below the need to provide more tangible support to reinforcement and independence of national media. This need of stronger support through national CSF to national media needs to be borne in mind with regard to the current situation in Montenegro marked by a confrontation between the State and independent and investigative media.

This being underlined, there is a fair consistency between the overall CSF objectives and priorities and these observed in the CSF-funded projects in Montenegro.

5. To what extent does the financial assistance respond to the specific needs of civil society in the targeted sectors?

The CSF has significantly improved the EU's response to specific needs of civil society in MNE, as in all IPA countries. This has been achieved through diversifying the range of available implementation instruments and/or structuring the typology of the thematic focuses of the national CSF components and corresponding CfPs.

It is noted that the quality and effectiveness of this response to specific CSO needs could be achieved in absence of any consultation and reporting framework allying the EU and the Government in design, planning and implementation of the CSF. This is a natural consequence of the CSF's centralized character, which brings along its disadvantages as little place has been left for at least some coordination and consultation. Whereas this is justified by the fact that in certain fields the EU needs to safeguard the independence of the CSF (rule of law, human rights, media and freedom of expression in particular.), it is less so when it comes to social insertion and all other domains where CSOs (still) play a fundamental role of service provider and where consultation and coordination between the EU and the Government would allow to enhance the effects and impact of CSF and contribute to better sustainability of its achievements.

Within the overall scope of IPA II, it is clearly stressed⁵⁴ that, as concerns the Sector of Governance and Democracy, "CSOs and social partners can make a substantial contribution to addressing many of these issues through their lobbying, advocacy and oversight activities at national and local level in every sector. They can create demand for enhanced transparency, accountability and effectiveness of public institutions and facilitate a greater focus on the needs of citizens in policy-making. Citizen participation can be fostered through e-government and e-inclusion. The involvement of civil society in the pre-accession process can contribute to deepening citizens' understanding of the reforms Montenegro needs to complete in order to qualify for EU membership".

As regards the responsibilities for the sector of "Education, Employment and Social Policies" (ESRP), it is also stressed that CSOs and social partners serve an important role in the success of the reform efforts in this sector and will be actively included in the ESRP. IPAII will support this process and build up their capacity.

However, when it comes to the EU's support to CSOs and social partners in Montenegro, it is stated that, "the risks associated with their involvement in the policy-making process will be mitigated by the functioning of the Civil Society Facility and by technical assistance at national and regional level. This will provide coordinated policy and financial assistance to the support to civil society and its dialogue with the Government".

This leads to consider that if the EU's support to civil society in Montenegro were fully contained within CSF (not taking into consideration the specific instrument of EIDHR), this would lead to a "consultation and coordination gap", since the CSF has not been embedded in IPA II (sector-based) monitoring, reporting and performance framework, which is fully based on a participative approach mobilizing all relevant national stakeholders.

Efficiency

6. To what extent has the provided financial assistance reached grassroots and community-based organisations?

The introduction in CSF of a blend of financial (sub-grants) and non-financial (capacity building) support targeting small, local (grassroots) CSOs has substantially improved the balance of funding, and allowed the resolution (or, rather, "bypassing") of certain conditions of CfPs which cannot be met by smaller – grassroots organizations.

⁵⁴ IPA II Indicative Strategy Paper for Montenegro 2014-2020

Tangible examples of good practice in this matter have been observed in Montenegro, generally taken in the projects awarded to strong CSOs having proven strengths for capacity building and of financial and administrative (sub-grants) management. These projects (such as the Project N° 3)⁵⁵ have succeeded in managing a large array of partnership agreements with several dozens of local CSOs, reducing the corresponding reporting and other formalities to a minimum in a manner which can be absorbed by such organizations (in particular communication in local language and simplified procedures). They have also attained their core target of building the capacity of these grassroots organizations.

Such examples plead in favour of selecting for such projects either CSOs with such proven capacity or – which is yet to come – consortiums of two national CSOs which ally their respective expertise and experience in (i) capacity building of grassroots organizations and financial and administrative management and (ii) a given thematic field which has been retained for a particular CfP.

7. To what extent has DG NEAR used an appropriate mix of funding instruments to reach the stated objectives of CSF support?

In the situation observed in Montenegro, both on the level of the full list of CSF-funded projects and the sample looked at in detail in the evaluation, it can be confirmed that awarded projects have represented a fairly comprehensive diversity of thematic fields. The above commented diversified outreach to smaller grassroots organizations has contributed to reinforce this diversity.

Nevertheless, it is also observed that the usual inertia of a long haul programme such as the CSF has not allowed the update of a number of its priorities for certain (national and regional/ multi-beneficiary) CfPs; an updating that would provide a better response to newly visible or expressed needs, or for those that have become a priority in the growingly confrontational context of relations between CSOs and the national government.

The on-going TA project (N° 7)⁵⁶ has brought a much needed bridging in supporting for national authorities in charge of civil society, and in cooperating with both the EUD and with civil society. However, this facet has been neutralized to a certain extent by the current dormant status of the National Council for Development of CSOs, so that the project's efficiency is significantly hampered by the actual institutional context. In addition to the situation of the National Council, the Government body in charge of civil society is now the newly created Ministry of Public Administration, which covers the governmental NGO Office, which is not yet fully mobilized, and the new national civil society strategy is still in preparation.

8. To what extent is the provided financial assistance flexible enough to respond to changing needs?

The EUD's assistance has indeed been provided to civil society projects funded through the CSF, but this support has been commensurate to the actual available means and resources of the EUD.

As stressed above, the CSF has brought more flexible and longer-term aid modalities, which have been designed in order to respond better to CSO needs, but more should be done both at the overall CSF level and as concerns its national components, as observed in the concrete situation of Montenegro:

- need to introduce a pragmatic tool for the follow-up of sub-grants, within a more general results-oriented framework;
- need to further adapt the implementation periods of certain CfPs when it comes to projects that are part of an overall and long-haul process (whether service delivery of advocacy) and/or need to seek their sustainability beyond the time spans allowed for by the current CfPs (e.g. rural development and agriculture projects);

⁵⁵ Contract Number: 345-136

⁵⁶ Contract Number: 373-104

- need for institutionalizing and facilitating the procedures for obtaining VAT exemption certificates, especially for grassroots CSOs operating in remote settlements;
- need for stronger involvement of the EUD in its follow-up of the technical implementation of projects.
- need for a CfP that allows for innovative approaches, PPP, or community-based actions, as opposed to the standard, capacity building interventions.
- need for a more proactive participation of the EUD in project events, especially those targeting the public and media, to enhance the visibility of the EU and CSF, as well as to demonstrate an ownership of the interventions of CSOs.

Effectiveness

9. To what extent is the financial assistance contributing to addressing the needs and priorities of the civil society sector? (Focus on civil society)

Bearing in mind the key feature of the CSF, which is an “autonomous” EU instrument managed centrally on the one hand, and the current institutional situation in Montenegro (see EQ 7), on the other hand, it can be clearly stated that the CSF has contributed to the capacity building and, in certain fields, empowerment of supported CSOs, without necessarily directly contributing to strengthening links with the national civil society development strategy (in preparation). This context is not facilitated either by the current dormant status of the National Council, nor the actual unpreparedness of the National NGO Office to take up a more explicit and decisive role⁵⁷.

10. To what extent is the financial assistance contributing to achievement of CSF’s stated strategic objectives and priorities? (Focus on the CSF itself)

The Montenegro evaluation findings are generally positive (as, overall, in other IPA countries) but attention is drawn to the fact that the CSF has currently not yet taken into full consideration the reported “shrinking” of civil society environment and space, which calls for specific focus and support.

On the one hand, the currently weak and poor dialogue between the State and civil society in the country (also reflected in the status of different tools – national strategy – and organizations – National CSO Council, Government Office for NGOs) has not contributed to enhance the effectiveness of the CSF, on an upstream level and beyond its direct contribution to strengthening individual CSOs. On the other hand, this weakness or gap has not facilitated the initiation, development or reinforcement of any potential inter-sectoral cooperation, a domain in which the Government should play the pivotal role of facilitator.

However, it is worth noting that the CSF, by promoting networking among CSOs, has addressed a major need of the civil society sector to participate in policy discussions. The financial assistance is reported to have strengthened the role of CSOs in working groups in a twofold manner: i) the assistance has enhanced the knowledge base of CSOs to assume their responsibilities in the accession process, and ii) the assistance has led to a more inclusive CSO representation in the working groups where networks that are members of working groups can convey the views discussed by all organizations constituting the network.

One should acknowledge here the systematic action of the EUD in order to follow up and monitor the ongoing CSF projects, by a coherent set of simple tools and templates. This action is reinforced through the cooperation for its implementation with the TA project, pending a stronger activation of the Government’s NGO Office, which would be expected to be associated in this partnership.

11. To what extent are the different implementation instruments effective in providing support to civil society?

⁵⁷ Reportedly, some positive changes have been taking place (as of October 2017)

The CSF has been designed to offer the possibility of several implementation instruments and several thematic fields, which has led to a fairly high diversity of projects based on best possible blends between these two dimensions.

The Montenegro portfolio of CSF funded projects has basically made use of one implementation instrument only, i.e. action grants including sub-granting, with one sole service contract for the TA. This can be understood, given the nature and scope of the issues addressed in these projects, so that a more relevant response to this question should be sought at the overall level of the CSF as a whole (see general findings in the report).

The CSF CfPs, other than the 2015 CfP targeting media, aim at: i) enhancing the role of CSOs in development, implementation and monitoring of public policies, and ii) capacity building of CSOs - actions to empower CSOs for participation in public policy debate, to enhance public-CSO cooperation, build capacity of smaller organisations through sub-granting and/or partnership with CSOs based in an EU Member State.

The rather generic nature of the CfP has allowed the development of projects in various fields of intervention, targeting different stakeholder/beneficiaries. The sub-granting schemes have allowed variations in the types and sizes and themes of funded and supported (capacity building) organizations.

It is worth noting that the CSF in Montenegro has supported CSOs with the capacity and experience to participate in policy discussions, while also supporting smaller, grassroots organizations through sub-granting.

Impact

12. What have been the impacts of the CSF to date?

It can be confirmed that the sample selected for the purpose of this evaluation, the CSF in Montenegro has attained its goal of supporting a broader (or “deeper”) scope of CSOs with the leverage of the blend of financial (sub-grants) and non-financial support to smaller grassroots CSOs, and this has permitted to achieve some effect on public policies, especially in the field of social inclusion.

- Projects with the contract numbers 306-400, 345-161, 374-391 in the sample have managed to establish good working relations with the national authorities, introducing EU practices.
- Project with the contract number 306-400 is piloting an approach introduced by the project and participating in public discussions in social inclusion working groups.
- Project with the contract number 345-161 developed manuals, guidelines and monitoring tools, some of which are mainstreamed.

The two projects have developed, or are planning to develop, follow-up projects to design new courses for vocational education, attempts which will further mainstream new methodologies and create new employment opportunities.

At a very local level, and through the (improved) cooperation of local CSOs, reinforced by the CSF, projects with contract numbers 306-435 and 371-015 in the sample have direct local authority counterparts, or have established working relations with local authorities. In the absence of a stronger structural “thrust” on an upstream level, of coordination and synergy between the CSF and government policies, these effects nevertheless already constitute an encouraging signal.

Generally taken, the CSF has reached positive effects as concerns, in particular:

- improved programming efficiency that has led to a better focus on, and links with, the priority needs of CSOs;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outreach to smaller grassroots organizations has clearly strengthened the active involvement of civil society as a whole, both geographically and thematically.
<p>13. Are regional networks funded through the CSF effectively advocating for policy reforms in Montenegro?</p>
<p>All discussions about regional networks are found in the Multi-beneficiary and Regional Project Evaluation Matrix, which can be found at Annex/ Appendix 9.</p>
<p>14. What factors are there, which contribute to or hamper impact?</p>
<p>The external factors that have weakened the CSF’s impact are, generally, the current institutional context, already briefly described above. To this can be added the risk for the CSF to lose its momentum and impact by leaving aside certain acute needs of CSOs, resulting from their currently confrontational relationship with the Government.</p> <p>As for internal factors, related to CSF design or implementation, several have already been highlighted above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • despite introducing more flexibility with longer implementation periods, CfPs are not yet fully responsive to the effective needs of certain civil society projects; • financial support (sub-granting) to local grassroots CSOs should be awarded only to strong national organizations, with proven capacity in the corresponding financial and administrative management, and of the needed non-financial support (capacity building, technical assistance); • sub-granting components lacks needed tools for results-oriented follow-up and reporting; • in the absence of some of these elements, the EU’s visibility in the overall domain of sub-grants has undergone certain negative effects (reporting by mainstream media criticizing the EU’s funding by sub-grants etc.)
<p>Sustainability</p>
<p>15. To what extent are the impacts noted to date sustainable and likely to continue producing effects after the end of CSF assistance?</p>
<p>There is certainly no single response to this “single” question, and the question of sustainability varies from one project to another.</p> <p>In general terms, results achieved within the framework of the CSF in Montenegro have prospects for sustainability at the action/output level, especially in initiatives in the field of social inclusion. A strengthened presence in the working groups, establishing working relations with national institutions, increase chances that CSF assistance will enhance CSO capacity to be effective and accountable.</p> <p>Sustainability of CSO strategic priorities or the need for these priorities is high. However, in discussions about the shrinking space for CSOs, strategic priorities should change for Montenegro. For example, in the absence of national funds, inclusion of service provision to marginalized groups or communities may prove effective in creating an impact on the development of human resources and a realization of fundamental rights.</p>
<p>Cross-cutting Issues (gender and human rights)</p>
<p>16. Is there a sufficient and effective focus in CSF funding on human rights and gender equality?</p>
<p>No significant deviations or shortcomings have been observed in these matters.</p>

Environment
17. Is there a sufficient and effective focus in CSF guidelines on the environment?
<p>Overall, there is a relatively small number of CSF-funded projects focused on the environment in Montenegro (3 out of a total of 39, i.e. less than 10%), which may appear as surprising, taking into consideration the extent of the environment issues in the country and their structural importance not only for the overall sustainable development of the country but also for the everyday life of the population. It is not easy to analyse the causes of this weak share, which may lead the EU to reinforce this thematic field as a core priority in a future CfP.</p> <p>However, certain CSF-funded projects do tackle issues of the environment, a domain which is also very relevant for the local scale cooperation between the CSOs and local authorities, and a number of Government bodies (agencies).</p>
Coherence, Coordination and Consistency
18. To what extent are the different national and regional actions of the CSF programme coherent/ complementing/ overlapping?
<p>No particular overlap has been observed but it remains that tighter coordination and search of complementarities should be set up, including synergies in certain domains.</p>
19. To what extent do supported projects ensure fulfilment of the visibility strategy set by the European Commission?
<p>CSF-funded projects have been implemented in the absence of an updated and reinforced manual on EU guidelines, with a particular focus on the specific facets of civil society projects. It has been underlined, in the process of preparing the IPA II Monitoring, Reporting and Performance Framework, that small, local and grassroots organizations can and should provide an optimal vector and leverage for qualitative reinforcement of EU communication and visibility, whether in civil society, local economic development or cross-border cooperation projects, and this opportunity has not yet been addressed by the current visibility guidelines.</p> <p>This question has a particular and crucial weight in the current context of IPA II, which calls for a more pragmatic, incisive and “visible” information in order to raise the general public awareness about the EU’s strategy, role and contributions, and this beyond the mere opinions of the technocrats involved in this domain.</p> <p>In the absence of these more incisive guidelines, negative effects on EU visibility have been observed in the mainstream media’s criticism of the EU’s funding by sub-grants to a number of local CSOs.</p> <p>This weakness or shortcoming can be improved (only) if the overall process of coordination and cooperation between the Government and the EU is more dynamic and proactive, without putting in question the independent character of the centrally managed CSF in Montenegro.</p>
Added Value
20. What value is added to the work and initiatives of Montenegro, compared to that which might be achieved without the contributions of the CSF?
<p>Since the CSF is by nature and purpose centrally managed it is difficult to seek any coordination with national initiatives. However, this may be sought in certain cases where CSF-funded projects join and combine with municipal initiatives, or, through working groups, participate in the policy discussions. This raises the important question of decentralizing the CSF in Montenegro, reportedly planned for (IPA) 2018 (see Montenegro Recommendations below).</p>

The CSF has made a visible contribution in national initiatives, especially through the experience and capacity they gained within the framework of networks. Funded organizations interviewed report that interaction between different platform members have helped to gain a broader understanding, and their presence in working groups as platforms, as opposed to individual organizations, has strengthened the voice of civil society in policy discussions.

7.7.5 Conclusions

Relevance

In Montenegro, as in all IPA countries, CSF has demonstrated its relevance and appropriate design, in order to provide an effective EU's support to the civil society in the region, by means of centrally managed instrument. Its central management is an evident strength, in particular in the current situation and institutional environment of the civil society, which is more often marked by confrontation between the CS community and the governments than by their effective cooperation. The CSF's mix of implementation instruments has been well adapted to the CS needs and capacities, and so has been the array of the different thematic fields covered in national and multi-beneficiary CfPs. One can nevertheless observe a relatively minor share of EU's support provided in the crucial thematic field of media and freedom of expression, an issue which can be related to the still insufficient EU visibility (see below).

Efficiency

It is clearly observed that the CSF could integrate in its design an appropriate mix of instruments, outreach capacity, thematic fields and flexibility, in order to perform as a well-conceived and efficient integrated instrument. This has been the case in Montenegro, and no significant flaws or shortcomings have been reported on or detected. CSF's efficiency depends nevertheless on some degree of consultation between the EU and the Government, although it is formally a centrally managed instrument, not subject to any particular consultation and partnership such as generally the case across IPA II framework. In terms of implementation modalities or instruments' mix CSF in Montenegro has essentially funded action grants, and an important technical assistance service contract, the efficiency of which has been to some extent weakened by the current institutional "gap": shifting the CS "sector" under the newly created Ministry of Public Administration, not in full speed yet, neutralization of the CS Council and slow development of the Government's NGO Office: a number of conditionalities that should have been solved in order to provide a more serene basis for the contribution of the TA. In terms of outreach to smaller grassroots CSOs, the CSF modality of providing financial (sub-grants) and non-financial (capacity building) to these organizations via grant contracts signed with larger CSOs (having the proven capacity for these and such functions) has shown its positive effects and has allowed to solve a number of constraints such as simplified procedures and utilization of local language for the final recipients, etc.

Effectiveness

Overall, CSF has been effective, in particular in providing appropriate support to CSOs' capacity building, and encouraging networking and peer-to-peer cooperation between them (in particular smaller/grassroots ones with the larger ones as their "senior" partners delivering them financial and non-financial support). The institutional "gap" mentioned above under "Efficiency" has also affected Effectiveness and risks to weaken the Impact, and it can be observed that more should have been done in supporting the media and the freedom of expression. The current institutional environment of Montenegrin CSOs is marked by

a degree of confrontation, rendered more acute by absence of structured CS-Government dialogue: dormant CS council, national CS strategy still in preparation, and, consequently, neutralization to some extent of the expected effectiveness of the TA support.

Impact

The brief conclusions above lead to consider that the CSF's impact is yet to come and has not yet approached a critical mass of its weight, such as would pave the ground for wider sustainability. The achieved impacts are felt in particular on the level of strengthening the CSOs, with a particular progress as concerns the small and local ones, thanks to the flexibility and outreach capacity. In certain domains such as rule of law and PAR, CSF has not reached significant impact, but this may be partly explained as a "collateral" effect of the absence of any dialogue between the EU and the Government in the frame of the CSF's design, programming and implementation.

Sustainability

In Montenegro as in other IPA countries, the very substance of "sustainability" varies from one thematic field to another. In the wider domain of social insertion, one cannot reach any significant sustainability unless the project is placed in a more conducive and facilitating context of dialogue and where needed partnership with the government (central and/or local) in order to ensure better prospects for the pursuance of achieved service delivery results etc. In certain other domains, and, a fortiori, when it comes to human rights, media and freedom of expression, sustainability strongly depends on the political context in the country, the quality of the democratization processes and of the CS-State dialogue.

One can therefore conclude that the current political and institutional environment of CSO activities in Montenegro is neither conducive nor facilitating, and is being affected by a number of shortcomings and weaknesses, in an overall context marked by confrontation:

- the transitional status of the Government's action, with the transfer of responsibility for the civil society sector to the newly created Ministry of Public Administration, together with the recently created National Office for cooperation with NGOs;
- the absence of any formal and consensual national strategy of civil society development, which is still in the Government's pipeline;
- neutralization of the NGO Council for nearly a year, a collateral victim of these circumstances;

Cross-cutting areas

The issue highlighted above is the apparently small (or insufficient) number of projects in the field of safeguarding and valorization of natural and cultural environment which is of crucial importance in a country like Montenegro, due in particular to heavy development along its Adriatic Riviera and a need to cope with a number of serious challenges in the field of environment, in the northern region of the country.

Coherence

There are no "Montenegro-specific" aspects of coherence that need to be highlighted, and the general conclusions on that level are fully applicable for this country.

Visibility

The general conclusions concerning the EU's visibility in general and visibility of CSF in particular are valid for Montenegro too. In absence of specific CSF visibility guidelines, it cannot be considered that all the potentialities for boosting the visibility have been explored, in particular so since the CSF has now managed to reach out deeper into the (capillary) tissue of the very small and local/grassroots CSOs. Furthermore, as in other IPA countries, the centralized management of CSF creates a limit, to some extent, for deployment of visibility markers, since the government (central and local) is not formally involved in its frame. This can generate negative effects, as observed in Montenegro in negative comments of the mainstream media concerning the EU's support (sub-granting in particular) to small/local CSOs.

7.7.6 Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the EUD, together with DG NEAR, improve monitoring and evaluation of the CSF through the introduction of SMART indicators at all levels of results. Further, it is recommended that the EUD initiate project evaluations, particularly where projects are larger, and/ or longer.
2. It is recommended that the EUD support and encourage further consolidation of the institutional context in order to rapidly achieve a more enabling environment, enhance the effectiveness of the ongoing TA project and optimize thereby the overall efficiency of the CSF.
3. It is recommended that the EUD have a focus of CfPs on delivering support to larger CSOs, in order for them to develop partnerships and support smaller CSOs (financially through sub-grants and non-financially through capacity-building). In this approach, the EUD would concentrate on retaining only those CSOs that have a proven capacity for these crucial organizational and management tasks. Moreover, in order to ensure better alliance between thematic expertise and organizational/capacity-building capacity, it is recommended that the EUD allow for/invite applications from consortia of 2-3 larger CSOs, which provide together this mix of assets and expertise.
4. It is recommended that the EUD consider strengthening CSF support to media and freedom of expression, with a particular attention to independent and investigative media not subordinated to Government influence.
5. In the specific situation of the CSF's planned decentralization (horizon 2018) in Montenegro, it is recommended the EUD consider the need of *gradual decentralization*, in order to maintain the politically sensitive thematic fields under centralized management (at least media and freedom of expression, human rights).
6. It is recommended that the EUD, together with other EUDs in the region, and DG NEAR, introduce a revised approach to developing effective visibility approaches for supported actions. Some planning for these visibility processes will need to take place at the regional level (to be then implemented by funded organisations), and some will be the direct responsibility of funded organisations.
7. It is recommended that the EUD engage in a process with DG NEAR and other EUDs, to further develop requirements and frameworks for the inclusion of human rights and gender as cross-cutting themes. A specific focus of this recommendations is to develop particular assistance for CSOs, to ensure they understand both the intent of, and the potential outcomes of this focus.

7.8 Annex/ Appendix 8 – Evaluation Matrix Serbia

7.8.1 Fieldwork Implementation and Serbia Portfolio

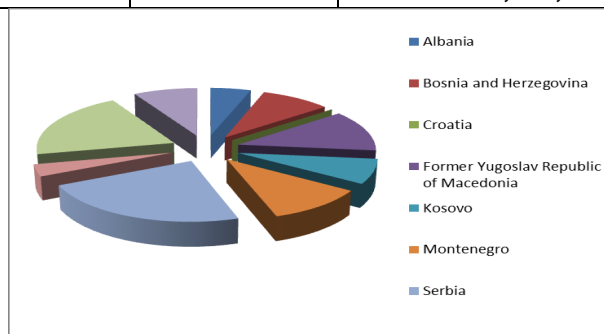
The evaluation fieldwork in Serbia was implemented through one mission, by one evaluator, from 24 – 28 April and field work undertaken by the evaluation team leader over a longer time frame, as he is based in Belgrade. The field work/ interviews covered all the projects listed in the Serbia sample, although no interviews were undertaken for contract number 372030 - Access to my rights (through Ombudsman cases), as the evaluation team was not able to get any response from the project lead (Monte Royal Pictures International) either via telephone or email. It also comprised briefing and debriefing meetings with the EUD, and several meetings with both the Government and CS actors.

7.8.2 Overall Portfolio

The overall structure of the total CSF portfolio 2011 – 2016 covered by the evaluation is shown below, as presented in the Inception Report (source: current CSF database).

Geographical Focus	Number of Contracts	Total EU Budget
Albania	19	EUR 6,087,544
BiH	33	EUR 12,912,470
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	45	EUR 9,911,482
Kosovo	27	EUR 8,544,842
Montenegro	39	EUR 6,688,387
Serbia	84	EUR 12,600,920
Turkey	13	EUR 11,058,604
WB and Turkey ⁵⁸	29	EUR 27,960,887
Multi-beneficiary ⁵⁹	73	EUR 35,055,931
Total	362	EUR 130,821,066

The breakdown of projects shows a relatively high share of Serbia (84 projects), followed by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (45) and Montenegro (39), Bosnia and Herzegovina (33) and a considerably smaller number of projects in Turkey (13). It has nevertheless to be noted that the average EU budget of the projects in Turkey is considerably higher the overall average. The multi-beneficiary (multi-country and WBT) projects represent a significant share of the total (103).



The CSF portfolio of national projects funded in Serbia in the 2011 – 2016 period has had the following structure by theme (total and average budget figures in Euros):

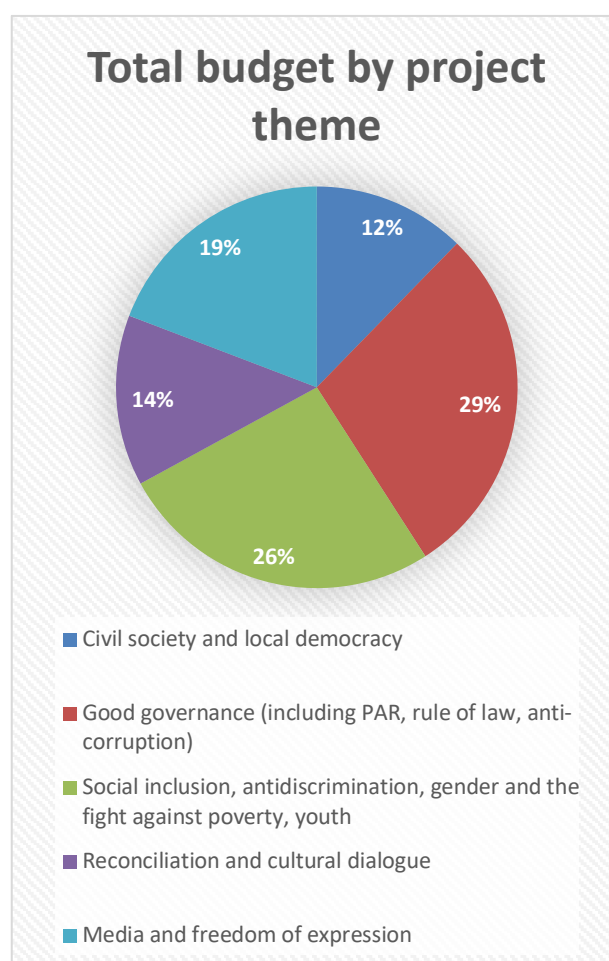
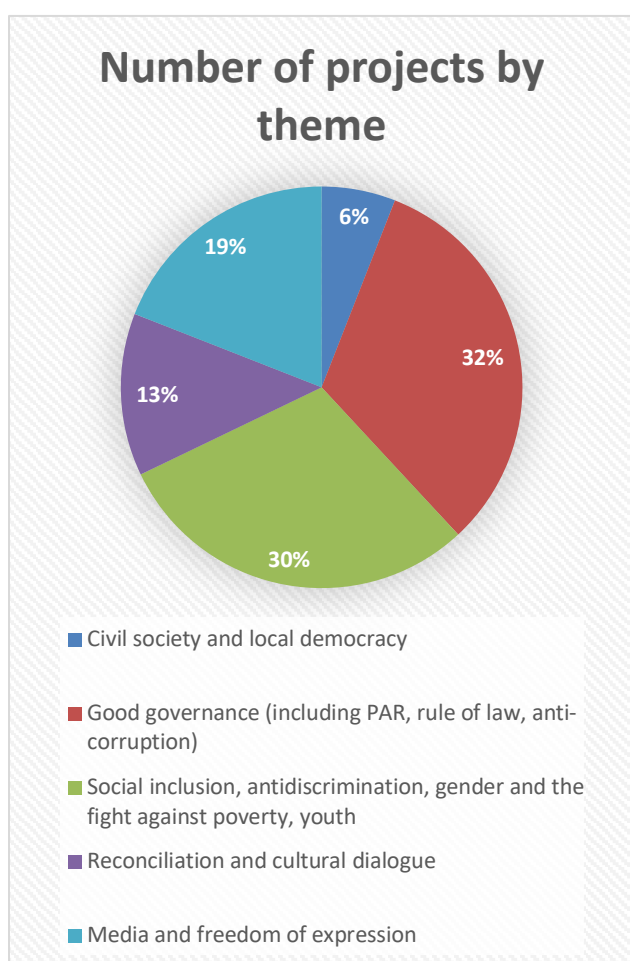
Theme	No. of projects	Total budget	Average
Civil society and local democracy	5	1,549,715.15	309,943.03

⁵⁸ This description is for contracts/ projects which focus on ALL countries in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

⁵⁹ This description is for contracts/ projects which focus on more than one beneficiary country (but NOT all countries).

Theme	No. of projects	Total budget	Average
Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	27	3,604,848.26	133,512.90
Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	25	3,293,552.48	131,742.10
Reconciliation and cultural dialogue	11	1,733,779.01	157,616.27
Media and freedom of expression	16	2,419,025.31	151,189.08
Total	84	12,600,920.21	

This structure is illustrated in the charts below:



The national projects selected for the Serbia sample are listed below; it is noted that all the projects in the sample belong to the implementation instrument of action grants, except for the technical assistance project.

Serbia sample of projects

	Title	Nature	Amount (EUR)	Theme
1.	Local Networking for Sustainable Development	Action Grants/ Open call	128.537,42	Civil society development and local democracy

	Title	Nature	Amount (EUR)	Theme
2.	Women in Progress – Capacity building at the local level for gender economic mainstreaming in Serbia	Action Grants/ Open call	103.476,88	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth
3.	Illustrated Glossary of Corruption	Action Grants/ Open call	129.578,30	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)
4.	Stop Corruption that Threatens Decent Work	Action Grants/ Open call	104.522,77	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)
5.	Equal in Social Service Providing	Action Grants / Restricted call	96.743,42	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth
6.	ReForce – Reinforcing the Role of Civil Society Organisations in Community Development and Public Administration Reform	Action Grants / Restricted call	96.712,71	Civil society development and local democracy
7.	The Context Studies: The Diversity of the Diversity	Action Grants / Restricted call	91.584,00	Reconciliation and cultural dialogue
8.	We plan strategically – and contribute to an accelerated development of local community	Action Grants / Restricted call	64.670,24	Civil society development and local democracy
9.	Networking for Community Child-Oriented model	Action Grants / Restricted call	92.609,25	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth
10.	Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre	Action Grants / Restricted call	126.037,44	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)
11.	Access to my rights (through Ombudsman cases)	Action Grants / Restricted call	140.769,00	Media and freedom of expression
12.	Local watchdogs	Action Grants / Restricted call	131.040,13	Media and freedom of expression
13.	Providing Effective Support to the Members of the Most Discriminated Groups and Their Organizations	Action Grant	497.000,00	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth
14.	"Public Money for Public Interest" - supporting civil society initiative for public interest	Action Grant	457.513,14	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)

	Title	Nature	Amount (EUR)	Theme
15.	Technical Assistance to the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society (Serbia)	Implementation / AOR - (FR2007) Restricted Call for Tender - External Actions	1.198.750,00	Civil society development and local democracy
Total budget: 3.459.544,70			Average budget: 230.636,31	

Evaluation sample of national projects in Serbia represents 17,85% of the total number of national projects funded under CSF in the 2011-2016 period, Out of fifteen (15) national projects in the sample, three (3) projects belong to the field of Good Governance (20%), three (3) to the field of social inclusion (20%), three (3) to the civil society development (20%), two (2) to media and freedom of expression (13.4%), and one (1) for reconciliation and cultural dialogue (6,6%). In addition, the evaluation in Serbia also covered a number of multi-beneficiary Projects whose base is in Belgrade.

7.8.3 Evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations in Serbia

The evaluation findings presented in the country annexes are placed within the approved evaluation matrix and thus all follow the same sequence:

Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Relevance – programming level	EQ 1 – EQ 3
Relevance – project level	EQ 4 – EQ 5
Efficiency	EQ 6 – EQ 8
Effectiveness	EQ 9 – EQ 11
Impact	EQ 12 – EQ 14
Sustainability	EQ 15
Cross-cutting Issues – Gender and Human Rights	EQ 16
Cross-cutting issues - Environment	EQ 17
Coherence, coordination and consistency	EQ 18 – EQ 19
Added Value	EQ 20
Lessons Learnt	EQ 21

The findings are followed by a synthesis in form of conclusions and recommendations. It is underlined that the findings and conclusions solely refer to Serbia and are not to be taken as general ones, on the level of CSF as a whole.

7.8.4 Responses to evaluation questions from the perspective of Serbian projects

Responses
Relevance – Programming Level
1. To what extent are the defined objectives of the CSF relevant?
<p>The CSF objectives for Serbia are relevant, based on the CSF guidelines and the recognised needs of civil society in the country, particularly taking into account the need for strengthening the capacities of CSOs to actively participate in decision-making processes, improving cooperation, coordination and exchange of knowledge at national and local levels. To address the lack of capacity at local level, the programme supported community-based organisations with action and operating grants for newly established organisations, training grants for building specific capacities of the organisations, as well as events and communication grants. Thematic support ranged from the good governance and anti-corruption, media and freedom of expression, to strengthening inter-cultural dialogue and local capacities and initiatives.</p> <p>Generally, CSF objectives, and the priorities of consecutive CfPs show strong alignment with the Copenhagen Political criteria for accession, particularly preservation of democratic governance and human rights. Civil society empowerment is integral part of the political criteria for the EU accession process, especially the role of the government to successfully perform and establish the conducive environment for the sustainable develop of civil society. Individual CfPs for CSF were based on the findings of the EU Progress reports, and ensured that the support to civil society responded to the recognised needs of involvement and strengthening capacities of CSOs to take an active role in reforms. For example, the CSF CfP for the 2013 National Programme aimed to increase the effectiveness of Serbian CSOs in undertaking initiatives focused on the fight against corruption, and greater transparency and accountability of public administration. Also, the Call aimed to strengthen support provided by Serbian CSOs, to people and groups that are more exposed to discrimination and discriminatory practices such as asylum seekers, readmitted people, LGBTI persons and children. The Call supported initiatives to strengthen cooperation between Kosovo and Serbia, supporting cultural initiative promoting intercultural dialogue, fostering cooperation between local communities and professional groups to stimulate initiatives of common socio-economic interests.</p> <p>The CSF document and spirit, follow the EU Guidelines in two relevant areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling environment <p>The EU provided assistance to the government of Serbia to establish a strategic and normative framework to enable civil society to be more active in building democratic institutions. Since 2013, the EU has been providing support to the Government Office for Cooperation with Civil Society⁶⁰ to boost dialogue between the state and civil society, and to ensure that a proper strategic framework for this co-operation is in place. Within the EU Civil Society Facility Programme 2011 – 2013, SIPU International – the Swedish Institute for Public Administration with a consortium, implemented the project ‘EU Support to the Government Office for Cooperation with Civil Society’, with a total budget of 1,198,750 EUR. These EU funds were programmed for institutional support to the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society of the Government of Serbia and for technical support to the EU Delegation in Serbia for managing and monitoring of grants</p>

⁶⁰ Contract Number: 307594.

Responses

within multi-beneficiary IPA 2011–2013. The project was implemented over a period of three years, from November 2012 until November 2015. EU technical and financial support responded to the needs of the Office to strengthen its focus on proactive engagement, stimulating civil society organisations to rise to new challenges and seize fresh opportunities for funding and development, not only in the framework of EU-funded programmes, but also more widely.

However, the reality is that the strategy for cooperation with civil society has not been adopted by the Government of Serbia. There was a point at which the Government of Serbia provided funds from the national budget for support to civil society. These funds were used for some time as the co-financing required by the CSF, but total now some 37,000 EUR annually, and are used much less often as CSF co-financing. (Last and this year the Office's funds have been used for co-financing EIDHR projects, since they have smaller budgets than SCF)

There have been significant changes in the management of the Office recently, presenting a great shift from the Office that existed at the time of the TA. It was strongly supported by civil society, and when the TA started the Office had been in existence for three years and still had huge support. There were lots of employees at that time coming from the non-governmental sector, and knew what was needed. The Office was even growing pretty quickly, in accordance with the systematisation of the working places within the Government. For the TA, this was a great challenge, particularly for Component 2: capacity-building, with results materialising positively. Things changed from the moment the Director decided to resign, as well as the year that followed when no new Director was appointed, affecting also the Project but also overall reach to civil society. A new Director has now been appointed.

- Capacities of CSOs in internal organisation and organisational capacity

There are 26,042 national civil society organisations (CSOs) registered at the Serbian Business Registers Agency (SBRA) at the end of 2014, of which 25,416 associations and 626 foundations and endowments⁶¹. CSF has had a strong focus on building the capacities of CSOs, through support to networks and development of grassroots organisations through re-granting schemes.

2. To what extent are objectives at different levels (strategic, MIPDs and programmes) clear, measurable and realistic?

CSF Objectives are generally taken as clear and realistic, and its Priorities are well aligned with the needs of civil society in the country – capacity building, dialogue with authorities and empowerment.

However, they need further elaboration in order to render them measurable, including introduction of SMART indicators, at all levels. This should be reflected in the CSF programming documents, in its future database and, more explicitly, in the conditions of its tenders (service contracts) and calls for proposals (grant contracts).

There is no systematic presence of intervention logic parameters and indicators, which renders follow-up, monitoring and evaluations more difficult and does not allow for any benchmarking and assessments on result achievement (performance as per the EU's Results Framework) of the Instrument as a whole, and of the individual projects it has funded.

⁶¹ Office for Cooperation with Civil Society (2015); Cooperation of State Administration and Civil Society Organisations; Baseline Study for the Development of the first National Strategy for Creating an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development in the Republic of Serbia 2015–2019; <http://civilnodrustvo.gov.rs/upload/documents/Publikacije/2015/IPSOS%20ENG%20bez%20aneksa%20sa%20naslovnom.pdf> accessed on 24 June 2017

Responses
<p>3. To what extent does programming take adequate and relevant account of assistance provided and reforms promoted by other (key) donors? (also pertinent to discussions of coordination/ complementarity)</p> <p>CSF programming takes account of assistance provided, and reforms promoted by other donors, but only to a certain extent. There are efforts made to facilitate information sharing across donor programs. The existing mechanisms in place do not ensure complementarity at the programming phase of different donor programs.</p> <p>There are a range of mechanisms that are used in CSF design and implementation that are focused on ensuring effective linkages between CSF priorities and funding and those of other key donors. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the structural level there is a well-founded and well-implemented coordination process across Member States and the EC in relation to the CSF. This is most notable in the agreement on the priorities and funding of the CSF prior to the Commission approving plans and funding. • This coordination is also visible in discussions regarding the Guidelines, and the input received from other donors (Member States) prior to finalisation of the Guidelines. • Coordination is also particularly visible in the commitment to EU Accession frameworks and prioritisation that is made by other key donors in their own planning and giving. <p>The process of donor coordination is being driven by the Government of Serbia, with support from the EUD, within the framework of the Sector Working Group for civil society. Within this context, a donor coordination meeting was held recently (April 2017), although this was the first meeting of this type in some 2 or 3 years. The process of coordination is slow, and while well-coordinated and supported by the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society, the sector working group and with significant support and encouragement from the EUD, overall participation of and coordination with other donors is not at a high level.</p>
Relevance - Project Level
<p>4. To what extent has the use of the financial assistance to civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey been consistent with the objectives of the EU's support to civil society within the Enlargement Strategy?</p> <p>The actions funded from the CSF Serbia are aligned with the Copenhagen political criteria for accession.</p> <p>The CSF has been focused in the EU political agenda some of these important issues have been covered by the CSF – anti-corruption, justice, human rights, good governance, freedom of expression, media freedom.</p> <p>There are a number of systems and processes in place that a) ensure links between the objectives of the EU's support to civil society and civil society itself. Further, these systems and processes (consultations, negotiations, conferences, discussions) work both 'up and down' in the process of informing, and in determining directions and priorities. In this context, there tends to be a significant correlation between the objectives of EU support and the activities and results of funded projects.</p>
<p>5. To what extent does the financial assistance respond to the specific needs of civil society in the targeted sectors?</p> <p>The CSF financial assistance responds to the specific needs of civil society as recognised in different studies, but also EU Progress reports.</p>

Responses

MIPD documents, EU Progress reports and CSF documents provide a comprehensive overview of the state of civil society and the main issues and needs civil society organisations and other civil society actors have. EU Progress reports provide analysis of civil society but also other areas of importance for EU accession. The CSF's objectives for national programmes are linked to these areas and focus on CSO actions that correspond with these priorities.

Another important support was directed to the media sector – whereby CSF support was important for sustaining investigative journalism and sustaining media networks that are weakened by recent changes in media policies and financing. EUD-funded media projects also recognise their related involvement in multi-beneficiary/ regional projects, and comment on the added benefits they find in effectiveness, capacity-building and visibility from this regional aspect.

The aims, objectives and activities of projects funded by the CSF's financial assistance in Serbia are very closely aligned to the overall objectives of the CSF. CSOs, in delivering their projects, contribute to CSF objectives and to the overall objectives of the EC in relation to civil society development. There is significant focus on accountability, on dialogue and the strengthening of ties between CSOs, on the development of knowledge and skills, on EU Accession activities and on development of democratic processes and citizen engagement.

Support to social inclusion and social service providers was also an important investment. Currently, Serbia has legislation that allows pluralism of social services, whereby providers can come from sectors other than the public sector. CSF funding was used by some organisations as an opportunity to further build the capacities of local service providers to expand their skills. For example, the CSO Civic Initiatives has produced a Manual for licencing of social services which was an important learning tool for CSOs and other professionals towards preparation for licencing of services.

Efficiency

6. To what extent has the provided financial assistance reached grassroots and community-based organisations?

The CSF financial assistance has increased its reach to grassroots and community-based organisations in Serbia through re-granting and support to networks. The main weakness of the assistance, however, is the fact that grassroots organisations have no possibilities to receive funds directly, but only through an intermediary organisation.

All interviewed stakeholders agree that CSF support, in the current context in Serbia with donor withdrawal, is critical for development and operations of CSOs. However, there is a debate about the CSF's reach to organisations outside of Belgrade and other centres, particularly in terms of the extent to which assistance reaches out to small, grassroots organisations. In this regard, a group of CSOs, members of the Aid Watch Serbia Coalition, sent an official letter to the EUD Ambassador in January 2013 stating that the 'Delegation inadequately supports decentralized development of civil society organizations in Serbia, and by that fact alone, decentralized development of the civil society'⁶². The letter continues discussing that the mentioned support of the EU towards different non-profit projects is largely implemented via CSOs who have their headquarters in Belgrade, and this situation negatively influences institutional development of CSOs based outside of the capital. The letter concludes that '[o]nly the direct support of the Delegation directed towards projects of CSO's with their headquarters in some other regions of Serbia, can significantly contribute to increase of operational and institutional capacities of such CSO's. Logically, much more than in a situation where these CSO's are involved as a project partner or when they are not involved at all, which is the predominant case here'⁶³.

⁶² <http://www.aidwatchserbia.org/dopis-ambasadoru-dezeru/>

⁶³ Ibid

Responses

CSF procedures are very strict, with financial and administrative requirements that make it impossible for smaller organisations to apply or receive the funds. Organisations in smaller communities do not have the required technical capacities, financial portfolio or previous reference projects to be eligible for CSF funding. Interviews reveal that, due to these issues, only a limited number of organisations keep receiving CSF funding.

Outreach to local grassroots organisations happens through support to networks or through re-granting. Interviewed stakeholders agree that this approach is appropriate as support to organisations through networks assists with peer learning and capacity building. However, interviews also raised issues faced in partnerships, even at the national level.

Re-granting promoted by the CSF is an opportunity to involve smaller CSOs, and BOS is a good example of successful implementation in this context. But there were not so many Calls with sub-granting approaches, and in fact the focus of the EUD is on re-granting as a *possibility* for, not a focus of, CfPs. There is an important question raised by large organisations as to why they would aim for re-granting. This, in essence, is a simple business logic – if an organisation can apply for a grant of up to 150,000 EUR, and if it has to invest its own resources but also its own systems in a re-granting process, it is a huge amount of work and an accountability challenge, which they can avoid if they apply for a project that does not include re-granting. If an organisation becomes a granting organisation, with all the related administrative processes, and if the process works, it is fine, but there is a challenge that small grants recipients are not capable, or responsible or accountable, which poses a threat for the entire system.

Some grants, in particular the larger grants, require more-developed organisations. Stronger organisations complain that they can do all the work without the small or mid-sized organisations, but since partnership is required they have to work with them. These mid-sized organisations are becoming passive, as the larger organisations have to deal with administrative/ management issues and there is no requirement for the mid-sized organisations to grow in skills etc. Mid-sized organisations, thus, have no reason to develop capacities to apply for a grant above 100,000 EUR - they are interested in grants between 50,000-100,000 EUR. The re-granting process is really an interesting approach for the smaller organisations, but not for mid-sized organisations, for whom specific Calls are required.

It does seem, on the basis of CSO experience, that sub-granting is best when related to the topic of the overall action, and to focus on the action and on building civil society capacity in that context. For at least on granting CSO, the focus of the whole process was on developing future partners, not for the sub-grant but as longer term partners.

7. To what extent has DG NEAR used an appropriate mix of funding instruments to reach the stated objectives of CSF support?

The CSF assistance in Serbia is mixed to a certain extent with regard to the thematic focus of grants, and their size, but not in terms of funding instruments.

CSF assistance in Serbia has provided through technical assistance (TA) and action grants. In Serbia there is no balanced mix of funding instruments. The CSF in Serbia has a very strong focus on action grants. During the period under review, there have been three TA projects funded and the balance have been long and short-term action grants (a total of 81 grants). More recently there has been a greater focus on lengthening the term of action grants, but there is no intention that this should be the ongoing focus. Determinations on instrument and length are done at the time of each CfP. A further aspect of the approach taken by the EUD in Serbia is that all longer-term, larger grants require partnerships. The 2016 Call had a total of 100 applicant organisations, of which 10 (plus a further 30 partners) received a grant. The focus in Serbia on sub-granting is somewhat smaller than in other EUDs.

8. To what extent is the provided financial assistance flexible enough to respond to changing needs?

Responses

Overall, the CSF in Serbia has a focus on flexibility, and responding to the changing needs of civil society organisations, although the funding approach is constrained by the size and variety of need, and flexibility of administrative arrangements are constrained by EU rules.

A review of sampled projects and interviews with implementing organisations indicates that the EU has been flexible in approving amendments of project towards better attainment of results, in the changing contexts of project implementation.

While some small amendments (mainly extension of timeframe of projects or small budget relocations) are approved easily, CSF rules and procedures are not sufficiently flexible to allow for more significant changes within projects. CSF projects, despite the fact that their duration is longer, do not have an inception phase. This is a significant weakness of the CSF – as an inception phase would have an approach for ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of their projects through further strengthening the implementation methodology and better targeting. An inception phase would contribute to better efficiency and effectiveness.

Interviews reveal that, during the implementation of TA, it was easier for implementers to approach the TA team and make the necessary changes based on the monitoring activities of the TA. Interviewees view the TA as a bridge between the EUD and implementers, and confirm that this was a very positive measure.

Effectiveness

9. To what extent is the financial assistance contributing to addressing the needs and priorities of the civil society sector? (Focus on civil society.)

There is a varying degree of effectiveness of CSF assistance in addressing the civil society needs.

The CSF has been effective in providing assistance to the Office for Cooperation through the TA. With support from the EU, the Office achieved results in consolidating the actions of public administration and promoting cooperation between the state and civil society. The Office has contributed to improvements in the legislative and regulatory framework necessary for civil society development in Serbia, as a part of the overall legislative and public administration reforms. TA supported analytical documents regarding mechanisms and methods of Cooperation between State and Public institutions with Civil Society Organisations”, and “The Guidelines for the Participation of Civil Society in Formulation of Legislation and Bylaws in Serbia”. The Guidelines were highly praised in the European Parliament Resolution of March 2015. The document established principles and general criteria for cooperation between public and civil sector. However, the actual implementation of these processes, and indeed the approval and implementation of the strategy for cooperation, has not happened, and the ongoing nature of the relationship between civil society and the Government does not operate with the intent envisaged through the TA and within the Office itself.

On the side of civil society, the CSF has to a varying degree contributed to the development of civil society, and links between civil society and government. Through re-granting and support to networks, there has been a large amount of peer learning and opportunities for capacity development, both of re-granting organisations and also grassroots partners and beneficiaries. However, interviewees reveal that many organisations, CSF applicants, hesitate to propose projects with re-granting schemes as operationalising grants brings a range of difficulties and complexities for such organisations. Challenges include, but are not limited to, development of administrative and financial procedures, monitoring and oversight of expenditure and also accountability for funds the granting organisation is not directly utilising. There is also the need to focus on grant administration, at the expense of the organisation’s own priorities in advocacy or citizen engagement.

Responses

Networking seems to be a better approach for organisations, as in this way the lead applicants are in charge of all financing and provide capacity-building activities to their network members. However, while networking is a positive experience for all engaged, it still does not allow small or medium sized organisations to experience grant implementation and thus build their own portfolios, or to be able to apply for larger funds themselves at some stage.

In the context of media, significant focus has been placed on addressing the needs and priorities of an independent media, addressing the skills and capacities of investigative journalism, and focusing on media freedoms. As well as specific Serbia projects, Serbian media organisations also participated in regional media activities, including with a focus on clientelism in media⁶⁴, and a regional network focused on media freedoms and the protection of journalists⁶⁵. Media projects in Serbia included, but were not limited to:

- A programme that was developed and produced with regards the role of the Ombudsman's Office, including a focus on increasing the visibility of the Office, and the understanding of the role of the Ombudsman in Serbian society.⁶⁶
- A project called *Missing Rights – Finding Solutions*, which addressed the skills of journalists in investigative reporting through professional training, a sub-granting programme and work on enhancements to cooperation between media outlets and CSOs in Kosovo and Serbia.⁶⁷
- A project by the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) to improve the knowledge of civil society about the role and function of a free media.⁶⁸

10. To what extent is the financial assistance contributing to achievement of CSF's stated strategic objectives and priorities? (Focus on the CSF itself.)

CSF assistance has had success in supporting the development of an active civil society, capable of participating in the public debate on democracy, human rights, social inclusion and the rule of law, as well as to influence policy-making and decision-making processes.

There are three key areas in which the CSF is supporting development of an active civil society - through:

- Promoting and enhancing accountability in the civil society sector and improving the institutional and operational capacity of CSOs.
- Encouraging sustainable CSO partnership and networks.
- Promoting the transfer of knowledge and experience.

CSF Assistance in Serbia has had a strong focus on empowering civil society organisations to take an active role in decision-making processes and to fulfil their mandates individually and/or through networks. Available project reports of sampled projects show results in building the capacities (knowledge and skills) of civil society organisations, and have contributed to their further professionalization. TA support to the Office for Cooperation with Civil society provided good results in terms of ensuring an enabling environment for the development of civil society. At the individual level, projects have contributed to improved

⁶⁴ Media Circle. Contract Number: 332758.

⁶⁵ Western Balkan's Regional Platform for Advocating Media Freedom and journalists' safety. Contract number: 369846.

⁶⁶ Access To My Rights (through Ombudsman cases), Contract Number: 372030.

⁶⁷ Contract Number: 371964.

⁶⁸ "Public Money for Public Interest" - civil society initiative to increase public input in state financing of media. Contract Number: 383186.

Responses
<p>interactions between beneficiary CSOs and government/ public authorities and among/ between CSOs. However, this interaction is mainly project related, and on many occasions ceases to exist upon expiry of funds and the finalisation of projects.</p> <p>Many projects focused on building capacities and also analysing the role of CSOs in local decision-making processes, among other activities. Examples of such projects are the ReForce⁶⁹ project by BOS and the CenTriR project⁷⁰. The CenTriR Project allowed insight into real volume of participation to date of civil society in the process of development and implementation of local strategies and plans, in last 10 years in Serbia. This insight occurred as a result of a detailed survey, conducted by the project, which pointed out examples of practice (including best practice), key problems and obstacles. This was the first survey of its kind in Serbia – prior to this there have only been unreliable estimates, including that many local strategies were not developed through a wide consultative process. Key findings of the survey represent a baseline and can be used for further monitoring in this field, while the defined recommendations and the best practice examples represent a guideline for CSOs and for local self-governments who want to improve the existing practice in their local communities. However, the extent to which these baseline data are monitored could not be established by this evaluation.</p>
<p>11. To what extent are the different implementation instruments effective in providing support to civil society?</p> <p>There is no real mix of instruments visible in the CSF in Serbia. The EUD has undertaken a strategy that focuses on Action Grants, with variety of approaches being found within this Instrument. The particular focus of this variety is in the length of grants, with some focus on sub-granting.</p> <p>Having said this, the instruments being used in Serbia are demonstrating an effectiveness in provision of support to civil society. TA to government has been successful in terms of establishment of institutional mechanisms for civil society consultations, although the established mechanisms are not themselves effective in the consultation processes.</p> <p>TACSO has contributed to growth in capacity (knowledge and skills) for CSOs participating in its processes, although the extent of this capacity growth is viewed as significant.</p> <p>Action grants, long and short-term, including with sub-granting components, are viewed as effective modalities of funding.</p>
<p>Impact</p>
<p>12. What have been the impacts of the CSF to date?</p> <p>Impact prospects of CSF funding in Serbia are mixed and depend to a large degree on external factors. At the project level, some impacts are more visible.</p> <p>There are significant differences between stronger CSOs in the capital and larger cities and the weaker, local grassroots organisations in smaller communities. The fact that donor aid to civil society is shrinking has affected many organisations, who have disappeared or who are significantly decreasing their activities. This coincides with CSF implementation, and the EU remains the main donor to civil society in Serbia. Application requirements are strict, not many organisations can apply and win the funds, and from those that do apply only a relatively small percentage are successful with their proposals. The implication of this scenario is that the space for civil society is ever smaller.</p>

⁶⁹ Contract number: 333329

⁷⁰ Contract Number: 333238

Responses

CSF funding was directed to both sides of the spectrum of civil society inclusion in decision-making processes: through TA to the Office for cooperation with civil society and through direct support to civil society organisations and networks. This support has been an important investment for better recognition of the role of civil society and its professionalization, and has also improved mechanisms for consultation with civil society. The evaluation process provided insight into the improved system for consultations in legislative/ policy drafting, and also into the capacities of civil society to provide quality inputs. For example, CUPS has directly modelled 10 laws in different human rights areas, of which three laws are related to media. Civil society also takes a proactive role in programming of EU assistance through the SEKO mechanism, and monitoring policies. At the local level, interviewees reported better collaboration between local governments and civil society, though this cooperation is uneven and in many cases project related. Impacts on cultural exchange and cooperation are also visible through the live cultural scene in smaller communities, despite the difficulties with funding and support to culture. In general, these impacts are still fragile and depend to a large extent on the individual profiles of decision-makers and also of CSO leaders. An example of this is the change of leadership in the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society – as a result of this change, the process of development of the Strategy for civil society has been stopped; also stopping related reforms at the same time.

13. Are regional networks funded through the CSF effectively advocating for policy reforms in the Western Balkans and Turkey?

All discussions about regional networks are found in the Multi-beneficiary and Regional Project Evaluation Matrix, which can be found at Annex/ Appendix 9.

14. What factors are there, which contribute to or hamper impact?

CSF impacts are strongly dependent on the extent to which the institutional environment, for support to civil society, is and continues to be strong and institutionalised. Another factor is the discrepancy between the level of capacities of CSOs in the population centres and in grassroots organisations. The lack of continuous financial support for CSOs is a decisive factor for impacts of civil society work in Serbia.

CSF support to the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society resulted in a number of positive institutional measures that the Office has been developing for cooperation with civil society, including, but not limited to, establishment of a permanent mechanism for the dialogue between the state bodies and civil society in matters of general and mutual interest; strengthening inter-sector cooperation in areas where CSOs have an important role in public policy formulation and implementation; and enhancement of policy framework for operations of civil society in Serbia. However, recent changes in management of the Office, and the external impacts of Government's lack of commitment to the Office and the mechanisms, have halted many processes, and interviewees raise concern of what these changes will bring.

Another important factor is the difference in the level of capacities of local and centrally-based CSOs. Interviewees confirm that the difference in the level of experiences, professionalization and access to decision-makers and funding opportunities is significant, between the local and central (mainly Belgrade-based) CSOs. Cumulatively, these differences amount to an uneven civil society which results in uneven impacts in creating a strong civil society in the country. This, among other factors, is caused by the lack of continuous support and access to donor funds for CSOs. Donor space is shrinking in Serbia, and, while the government is the main funding source for civil society, some areas (such as human rights, culture, media) remain underfunded or if funded, then lead by government and/ or political priorities.

Unstable funding for organisations creates uncertainty and the wasting of enormous amounts of energy in fundraising and in complying with donor requirements, instead of 'doing the job'. Many CSOs do not have the capacities and/ or financial portfolio required to get funding, which has caused many, even stronger CSOs, to disappear.

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<p>Finally, a strong impact-inhibiting and sustainability-hindering factor is the situation where government institutions are interested in or have capacity to work with or engage CSOs while there is project funding, but their support or level of engagement for results and maintenance of results decreases or disappears once funds are longer available.</p>
<p>Sustainability</p>
<p>15. To what extent are the impacts noted to date sustainable and likely to continue producing effects after the end of CSF assistance?</p>
<p>The sustainability of the CSF actions in Serbia remain fragile; many of the actions financed by the CSF face difficulties in producing effects after project finalisation.</p> <p>While projects show results during project activity, many of these results disappear or decrease soon after the project ends, due mainly to the project orientation of organisations. Turnover in government institutions is also a critical factor in the decreased likelihood of sustainability for achieved results.</p>
<p>Cross-cutting Issues (gender and human rights)</p>
<p>16. Is there a sufficient and effective focus in CSF funding on human rights and gender equality?</p>
<p>The focus on human rights in the CSF for Serbia is strong; however, when looked at more deeply in the actual project work of funded organisations, focus on gender seems to be more declarative than essential.</p> <p>The CSF has supported a number of projects dealing with different aspects of human rights, in line with the Copenhagen criteria, and this support is perceived as positive and important. However, while gender has been integrated as a separate section in proposals, and also emphasised as important, the gender aspect is still more visible at the quantitative level (e.g. gender disaggregation of participation), or declarative, rather than substantive, in the actual implementation of projects.</p>
<p>Environment</p>
<p>17. Is there a sufficient and effective focus in CSF guidelines on the environment?</p>
<p>There is no real focus on environment in and CfPs in Serbia.</p>
<p>Coherence, Coordination and Consistency</p>
<p>18. To what extent are the different national and regional actions of the CSF programme coherent/ complementing/ overlapping?</p>
<p>The CSF actions in Serbia follow priorities as recognised by EU programming documents and EU progress reports. Still, there is a potential for overlap between CSF and EIDHR or some sectoral support instruments.</p> <p>There is a clear complementarity in the work of the CSF with EIDHR, although areas of overlap are noted. In its 'support to democratic processes', the EIDHR has a specific focus on '<i>cooperation between civil society and local authorities and relevant state institutions</i>', which, while complementary to the CSF, can be seen also as clearly overlapping with the CSF's objectives with public authorities, and advocacy in support of democratic issues and participation in the democratic process. The CSF focus on social inclusion, anti-discrimination and gender complement EIDHR priorities, but also can be seen as overlapping with the EIDHR's strong emphasis on vulnerable groups. However, in practice this overlap is not ever likely to happen as the EUD takes great care, when</p>

Responses
<p>entering areas of complementarity/ overlap with the EIDHR, to establish specific criteria for the Call that will mean there is no potential for overlap in that specific Call.</p> <p>There are however visible, and not unimportant issues related to coherence to be addressed across/ within the CSF. These issues are visible in a number of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUDs do not know enough about MBs, generally and in their country. There is a related lack of correlation in the responses provided by EUDs and DG NEAR to questions from funded organisations. • There is not enough learning across EUDs and up to DG NEAR, particularly in relation to successful approaches and strategies.
<p>19. To what extent do supported projects ensure fulfilment of the visibility strategy set by the European Commission?</p>
<p>CSF projects follow EU visibility requirements.</p> <p>Review of sample project documentation and interviews confirm that all projects reviewed adhere to EU visibility requirements.</p>
<p>Added Value</p>
<p>20. What value is added to the work and initiatives of beneficiary countries compared to that which might be achieved without the contributions of the CSF?</p>
<p>The main value added of the CSF is that it is an instrument that is totally independent from government or other actor other than civil society. The fact that the CSF is programmed centrally takes away from any concern that there can be government influence in selection of priorities for funding. Having said this, there is a real cooperation between the EUD, civil society and Government in the formulation of CfPs.</p> <p>Another value added of the CSF in Serbia is that it remains as one of the rare funding mechanisms for CSOs and media, closing the gap that opened with the withdrawal of donors and the lack of more transparent government funding for CSOs. The EUD tries to have one focus on media initiatives each year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a real growth in expertise – individual experts – through their engagement in expert roles in a variety of projects. • There are a number of examples of empirical research from CSF-funded initiatives contributing directly to advocacy work on policy and legislative frameworks with national authorities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Mapping activities by CSOs. ◦ Database activities by CSOs – developing knowledge, systems, capacities in this area, in ways that contribute to evidence-based advocacy. • The growth in capacity in CSOs is most noted in their strategic capacities – thinking and planning. This was not necessarily a focus of initiatives, but was the area that grew most noticeably.

7.8.5 Conclusions

Relevance

CSF financial assistance is relevant for Serbia and for strengthening the enabling environment for civil society. It is also relevant for addressing the capacity-development needs of CSOs, for them to take a more active role in policy processes. The CSF's multi-pronged approach towards strengthening the capacities of the Office, while at the same time supporting cooperation, coordination and exchange of knowledge among organisations at national and local levels, responds to the needs and capacity gaps on both sides of the spectrum. Selection of CSF CfP themes, particularly supporting good governance, media and freedom of expression, social inclusion, and reconciliation, have been relevant to the context of Serbia. CSF programming takes into account EU progress reports and analyses of the civil society context. CSF programming also takes into account assistance and reforms promoted by other donors, but only to a certain extent. There are efforts made to facilitate information sharing across donor programs, but weaknesses are found in existing mechanisms which do not ensure complementarity during the programming phase of the different donor programs.

Efficiency

CSF assistance to Serbia is moderately efficient. CSF assistance focuses on responding to the changing needs of civil society organisations, although the funding approach is constrained by the size and variety of need, and flexibility of administrative arrangements are constrained by EU rules. CSF financial assistance has increased its reach to grassroots and community-based organisations in Serbia through re-granting and support to networks, although the size of re-granting components, and a lack of a focus with this instrument constrains assistance to grassroots and community-based organisations, as they are not able to access funds directly, but only through intermediary organisations. There is an apparent emphasis on provision of support to organisations in the capital. The CSF has a heavy emphasis on action grants and technical assistance, with some further balance being added with sub-granting, although this is not a key component of funding. During the period under review, there were three TA projects funded and the balance were long and short-term action grants (a total of 81 grants). Timeframes and partnership requirements of projects vary between CfPs. The approach taken by the EUD, in determining type of instrument and length of grant, is considered appropriate. One particularly positive measure was the inclusion of a component of monitoring and support to grantees.

Effectiveness

The CSF has had a varying degree of effectiveness in addressing civil society needs. TA provided through CSF, both to the government and to civil society (TACSO) has brought some positive results in the extent to which cooperation between the state and civil society was promoted and moved. The Office has contributed to improvements in the legislative and regulatory framework necessary for civil society development in Serbia, as a part of the overall legislative and public administration reforms. However, the outcomes of this support have not materialised through approval and implementation of the strategy for cooperation, due to political and other reasons beyond the control of the CSF, which diminishes the results of improved nature of the relationship between civil society and the Government today.

The CSF's direct support to civil society, through action grants and support to networks has also had a varying degree of success. At project level, envisaged results are generally achieved, and CSF assistance has had success in supporting the development of an active civil society, capable of participating in public debates on various subjects. However, it is difficult to measure the contribution of these results to the CSF's overall results, due to the missing link of a monitoring and systematic follow-up. The absence of devised indicators and a more well-defined results framework at the national level makes it difficult to understand the extent to which assistance has contributed to organisations building their capacity and professionalism, in order to take strong role in policy-making processes.

Impact

Impact prospects of CSF funding in Serbia are mixed and depend to a large degree on external factors. CSF support has been an important investment for better recognition of the role of civil society and its professionalization, and has also improved mechanisms for consultation with civil society. CSF grant support enabled organisations to take advantage of the improved system for consultations in legislative/ policy drafting, by offering their inputs in the process for model laws, inputs and comments to policies and legislation and also support to oversight and monitoring of their implementation. CSF impacts are strongly dependent on the extent to which the institutional environment, for support to civil society, is and continues to be strong and institutionalised. Another factor is the discrepancy between the level of capacities of CSOs in the population centres and in grassroots organisations. The lack of continuous financial support, from a variety of sources as opposed to just the CSF, for CSOs is a decisive factor for impacts of civil society work in Serbia.

Sustainability

The sustainability of CSF actions in Serbia remains fragile, and many of the actions financed by the CSF will face difficulties in producing effects after projects close. As a result of the lack of more systematic and transparent mechanisms for funding of CSOs, and also weaknesses in the Office, as a result of political and other pressures, the sustainability prospects of CSF results, even at project level, are weak. At project level, some achievements (for example, stronger cooperation with government; inputs in policies and legislation, new services, and mechanisms for support to final beneficiaries) are sustainable, but due to fragmentation of CSF support and a shrinking donor space, the sustainability of overall results is not ensured.

Cross-cutting Issues

The focus on human rights in the CSF for Serbia is strong; however, the focus on gender seems to be more declarative than essential. CSF in Serbia did not have a focus on environment. While CSF assistance targets appropriately issues relating to human rights, it seems that gender is included more as declarative and not truly mainstreamed concept. CfPs require elaboration, in a separate section, on how gender (as well as other cross-cutting issues) can be tackled by projects, but assessment of applications illustrates that gender is mentioned but not necessarily elaborated. Gender is also presented in most cases through gender disaggregation of participation in events or trainings, but no deeper analysis is performed. This is a weakness of the CSF approach to this cross-cutting issue.

Coherence

CSF actions in Serbia follow priorities as recognised by EU programming documents and EU progress reports. Still, there is a potential for overlap between CSF, CBC and EIDHR, and some sectoral support instruments. There is only a minimum of visible learning and sharing between EUDs and with DG NEAR, in relation to the design, implementation and administration of CfPs. A more considered approach has the potential to improve CSF outcomes by improving systems and approaches across the whole of the regional programme.

Visibility

The CSF projects follow EU visibility requirements. The CSF is, besides the EIDHR, the most visible instrument for civil society. Participation in CSF-funded projects also allows organisations to work on stronger advocacy and inclusion in policy processes, which in turn, raises the visibility of the EU as a donor. Also, as civil society organisations work at the local level, their proactive promotion of the EU as a donor raises awareness of EU support in local communities. Having said this, the current requirements for visibility, and their implementation, do not ensure a sufficiently high level of EU visibility from the financing and outputs/

outcomes of CSF projects. The intent of the EU through this funding, and the contribution to civil society development from the CSF, is not well-enough understood across society in Serbia.

7.8.6 Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the EUD, together with DG NEAR, improve monitoring and evaluation of the CSF through the introduction of SMART indicators at all levels of results. Further, it is recommended that the EUD initiate project evaluations, particularly where projects are larger, and/ or longer.
2. It is recommended that the EUD ensure internal coherence among instruments (particularly EIDHR, CBC and CSF) through discussions and decisions on funding priorities and themes and the timeliness of CfPs, with the intent of a greater reach to different types of organisations.
3. It is recommended that the EUD facilitate the application processes for grants, and the possibilities for organisations to successfully apply for grants through:
 - a. Introduction of different LOTs for larger/ stronger organisations and for smaller/ weaker organisations.
 - b. Introduction of local language/s in applications.
4. It is recommended that the EUD include inception phase in all projects of longer duration (3+years).
5. It is recommended that the EUD, together with other EUDs in the region, and DG NEAR, introduce a revised approach to developing effective visibility approaches for supported actions. Some planning for these visibility processes will need to take place at the regional level (to be then implemented by funded organisations), and some will be the direct responsibility of funded organisations.
6. It is recommended that the EUD engage in a process with DG NEAR and other EUDs, to further develop requirements and frameworks for the inclusion of human rights and gender as cross-cutting themes. A specific focus of this recommendations is to develop particular assistance for CSOs, to ensure they understand both the intent of, and the potential outcomes of this focus.

7.9 Annex/ Appendix 9 - Evaluation Matrix Turkey

7.9.1 Fieldwork Implementation and Portfolio

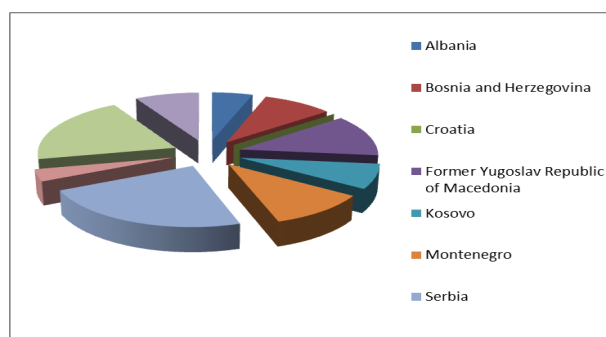
The evaluation fieldwork in Turkey took place from 6 to 8 June 2017, and has covered working meetings with all the projects in the sample (both in Ankara and in Istanbul) as well as with the EUD, the NIPAC and the Government's department in charge of the CS, in the Ministry of European Affairs.

7.9.2 Overall Portfolio

The overall structure of the CSF portfolio 2011 – 2016 covered by the evaluation is shown below, as presented in the Inception Report (source: current CSF database).

Geographical Focus	Number of Contracts	Total EU Budget
Albania	19	EUR 6,087,544
BiH	33	EUR 12,912,470
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	45	EUR 9,911,482
Kosovo	27	EUR 8,544,842
Montenegro	39	EUR 6,688,387
Serbia	84	EUR 12,600,920
Turkey	13	EUR 11,058,604
WB and Turkey ⁷¹	29	EUR 27,960,887
Multi-beneficiary ⁷²	73	EUR 35,055,931
Total	362	EUR 130,821,066

The breakdown of projects shows a relatively high share of Serbia (84 projects), followed by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (45) and Montenegro (39) and a considerably smaller number of projects in Turkey (13). It has nevertheless to be noted that the average EU budget of the projects in Turkey is considerably higher than the overall average. The multi-beneficiary (multi-country and WBT) projects represent a significant share of the total (102).



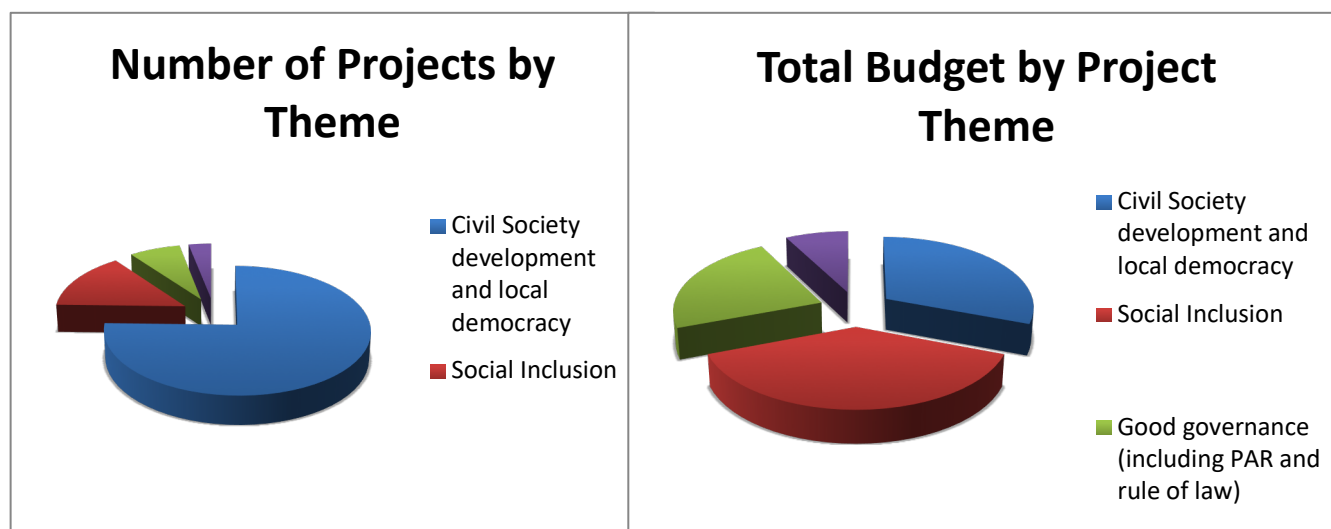
The CSF portfolio of national projects funded in Turkey in the 2011 – 2016 period has had the following structure by theme (total and average budget figures in Euros):

Breakdown of National Projects in Turkey By Theme	Number	Budget	Average
Civil Society development and local democracy	4	8,339,460	2,084,865
Social Inclusion	5	1,603,305	320,661
Good governance (including PAR and rule of law)	3	775,477	258,492
Media and Freedom of Expression	1	340,362	340,362
Total	13	11,058,604	850,662

⁷¹ This description is for contracts/ projects which focus on ALL countries in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

⁷² This description is for contracts/ projects which focus on more than one beneficiary country (but NOT all countries).

This structure is illustrated in the charts below:



It is noted that out of 13 projects funded under CSF in the 2011-2016 period, five support social insertion (including child rights), and four are focused on a general capacity building of the civil society (Civil Society Support and “Sivil Düşün”); these civil society development projects have an overwhelming share of the total budget.

The national projects selected for the Turkey sample are listed below; it is noted that the projects in the sample (and, for that matter in the long list of all Turkey national projects) fall under the implementation instruments of Technical Assistance and Action Grants.

TURKEY SAMPLE OF NATIONAL PROJECTS

	Contract Number	Title	Amount (EUR)	Theme
1	332438	Diversity and Litigation Platform Turkey	230,000	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth
2	352923	Turkey's Prison Information Network (TPIN)	269,981	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)
3	370752	Civil Society Facility (Sivil Düşün II)	4,989,460	Civil society development and local democracy
		TOTAL	5,489,441	

This evaluation of national projects in Turkey covers 23 % of the total number of national projects funded under CSF in the 2011-2016 period and 49.6% of their cumulated budget.

The evaluation fieldwork in Turkey also covered a multi-beneficiary Project titled “Civil Society Acts for Environmentally Sound Socio-Economic Development” (Contract N° 371198), managed by the national office of World Wide Fund for Nature WWF (DOGAL HAYATI KORUMA VAKFI).

7.9.3 Evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations in Turkey

The evaluation findings presented in the country annexes are placed within the approved evaluation matrix and thus all follow the same sequence:

Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Relevance – programming level	EQ 1 – EQ 3
Relevance – project level	EQ 4 – EQ 5
Efficiency	EQ 6 – EQ 8
Effectiveness	EQ 9 – EQ 11
Impact	EQ 12 – EQ 14
Sustainability	EQ 15
Cross-cutting Issues – Gender and Human Rights	EQ 16
Cross-cutting issues - Environment	EQ 17
Coherence, coordination and consistency	EQ 18 – EQ 19
Added Value	EQ 20
Lessons Learnt	EQ 21

The projects cited as examples in the Turkey findings are numbered from 1 to 3, corresponding to their number in the sample list above.

The findings are followed by a synthesis in form of conclusions and recommendations. It is underlined that the findings and conclusions solely refer to Turkey and are not to be taken as general ones, on the level of CSF as a whole.

The same goes for the recommendations, which are limited to these that are specific for Turkey, and which do not cover any issue already tackled in the general recommendations, concerning the CSF as a whole.

7.9.4 Responses to evaluation questions from the perspective of Turkey projects

Responses
Relevance – Programming Level
1. To what extent are the defined objectives of the CSF relevant?
<p>As in all other IPA countries, the CSF Objectives are fully consistent with regard to the EU enlargement strategy. As stated in the EU Enlargement Strategy 2016, Turkey has faced a failed coup attempt as a direct attack on democratic principles on 15 July 2016 and as of 20 July is going through a state of emergency. The EU has expressed its full support for, and solidarity with the Turkish people and its democratic institutions: “Given the scale and collective nature of measures taken since July, the EU has called on Turkey, as a candidate country, to observe the highest standards in the rule of law and fundamental rights. The Turkish authorities undertook clear commitments to this end. The Commission urges Turkey to implement them in full, including through international monitoring of the detentions, trials and procedures after the coup attempt. The EU is committed to working together with a democratic, inclusive and stable Turkey to address our common challenges. Yet, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms must be respected under all circumstances, and the parliament and all forces represented in the democratic institutions of the country must be able to play their constitutional role in full. Regarding the renewed considerations to introduce a bill in parliament to reinstate the death penalty, the EU recalls that the unequivocal rejection of the death penalty is an essential element of the EU <i>acquis</i> and a central international obligation to which Turkey has committed.” (page 10)</p> <p>Furthermore, the EU’s Country Strategy Paper 2014-2020 for Turkey⁷³ highlights that “An active civil society demonstrates effective pluralism which implies respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, the rule of law and the possibility of social and political change. Civil society activities can stimulate and expand the space for dialogue and cooperation on matters of public interest, including on the EU accession process. Turkey’s participation in Union programmes, allowing for exchanges between Turkish and EU citizens, is an important complementary measure in this area. Turkey particularly needs more inclusive approaches to formulating policy and making decisions of public interest. Civil society organisations also play an important role in promoting fundamental rights. In this spirit, the Commission will continue to support civil society development and civil society dialogue with a specific sub-sector programme, but will also make additional funding available in other sectors where needs exist.” (page 11-12)</p> <p>The specific objective of the CSF for Turkey⁷⁴ is fully aligned with these strategic orientations. The overall objective for the CSF 2011- 2013 is “to contribute to anchoring democratic values and structures, human rights, social inclusion and the rule of law, thereby supporting the EU integration process.” The programme purpose is to achieve: ‘A more dynamic civil society actively participating in public debate on democracy, human rights, social inclusion and the rule of law and with capacity to influence policy and decision making processes.’</p> <p>The focus of the CSF in Turkey has been be the achievement of three outcomes:</p>

⁷³ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2014/20140919-csp-turkey.pdf

⁷⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/financial_assistance/ipa/2012/pf_9_csf-tr.pdf

- Greater benefit for civil society from national legal and financial frameworks and improved dialogue with state institutions;
- Greater commitment from, and a greater capacity of civil society organisation (CSO) networks to give citizens a voice and influence public sector reform processes through analysis, monitoring and advocacy etc.;
- Increased access of grassroots organisations and civic initiatives to financial resources, in-kind contributions or expertise from established CSOs and CSO networks.

CSF objectives remain relevant to the assessed needs of civil society. However it should be noted that civil society in Turkey is faced with a serious threat of 'shrinking space for civil society' and needs are changing almost on a daily basis. The CSF in Turkey consists of a flexible mechanism, Active Citizenship Mechanism of *Sivil Düşün Programme* that provides a rapid response to changing needs, to a certain degree.

2. To what extent are objectives at different levels (strategic, MIPDs and programmes) clear, measurable and realistic?

CSF Objectives are generally clear and realistic and its Priorities are well aligned with the crucial needs of the civil society – dialogue with the State, capacity building for networks, increased access to grassroots organizations and civic initiatives.

However, the indicators in the *Guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries, 2014-2020* are difficult to monitor, due to a lack of baseline data to monitor progress at the country level. The CfPs do not make a specific reference to the CSF indicators, which results in formulation of project indicators mainly at output level, such as may not provide an insight about progress, and impairs the chances of reporting towards programme objectives.

3. To what extent does programming take adequate and relevant account of assistance provided and reforms promoted by other (key) donors? (also pertinent to discussions of coordination/ complementarity)

To avoid overlapping assistance, *the Commission systematically consults and meets Member State embassies, International Finance Institutions and International Organisations, especially at the country level.⁷⁵The EU is the major donor for civil society. Other actors are member states, mainly the Netherlands, Sweden, and Denmark, as well as international CSOs. At the field level there is a certain degree of interaction and collaboration between donor organizations that increases the coherence and complementarity of external assistance. On the other hand, efforts are invested to establish the coordination structure, including donor coordination, for the Civil Society Sub-Sector, which may further improve the coordination and complementarity.

The EU programming for civil society support receives input from:

- coordination/consultation meetings carried out by TACSO and Sivil Düşün Programme.
- information/consultation meetings carried out by the Ministry of European Union Affairs (MEUA) as the lead institution for the Civil Society Sub-sector.

Coordination and complementarity of the CSF-Turkey and the EIDHR is efficiently managed by the EUD in Ankara in a manner to ensure the sustainability of the work accomplished by the networks and platforms, including small member CSOs working in the field of democracy and human rights. .

⁷⁵ IPA II Indicative Strategy Paper for Turkey 2014-2020, page 10.

Coordination between the main current and future actors of CSF-Turkey (TACSO/STGM, Sivil Düşün, beneficiaries of the Grant Scheme for Networks and Platforms) is carried out in a daily basis in a constructive manner.

Coordination of the Civil Society Dialogue (CSD) Programme under IPA is undertaken by the MEUA. Complementarity of CSF and CSD is ensured during programming. The CSF-Turkey focuses on CSOs whose major line of activity is to promote fundamental rights, monitoring and reporting on human rights issues. The programmes within the framework of National IPA include the Civil Society Dialogue programme managed by the MEUA, TA for Public-CSO cooperation where the Ministry of Interior Department of Associations is the beneficiary as well as the grants schemes within the framework of relevant operating structures (i.e Human Resources Development Operational Programme and Regional Competitiveness Operational Programme), under the DIS (decentralized implementation system?) aim at capacity development among public institutions, cooperation with CSOs in service procurement as well as supporting interventions for alignment with the *acquis*. The quarterly Implementation Review Meetings (IRMs) and day-to-day contacts ensure smooth interaction at the technical level. However, there is an expressed need to ensure systematic flow of information about the CSF to the lead institution of the Civil Society Sub-Sector, the MEUA, which may facilitate policy level dialogue.

Active Citizenship Mechanism under the TA for the Sivil Düşün Project, on the other hand, is a major means of complementarity for all donor-funded activities, in helping them produce their results and to increase impact prospects.

Harmonization of practices by national funds needs strengthening, to align the overall objectives and to converge the practices; a need which is expected to be responded to through the recently awarded TA for Public-CSO cooperation⁷⁶, and will further ensure progress towards alignment with EU practices

Relevance - Project Level

4. To what extent has the use of the financial assistance to civil society in Turkey been consistent with the objectives of the EU's support to civil society within the Enlargement Strategy?

The financial assistance to civil society in Turkey is relevant to the Copenhagen Criteria, the Guidelines for EU support to CS, and the 2014-2020 EU strategy (see EQ 1).

The national CSF assistance in Turkey consists of 9 projects for the establishment of networks and platforms and a CSO support programme through a TA contract introduced in 2012 and planned to continue beyond 2018.⁷⁷ The projects under the networks and platforms⁷⁸ component of Sivil Düşün consist of networking and capacity building activities for CSOs targeting a wide range of vulnerable groups including children, youth, women victims of violence, LGBTI, and prisoners. There are four projects under the category of social inclusion, three projects under the category of good governance, one project for capacity building and one project on freedom of the press.

⁷⁶ Technical Assistance for Strengthening the Public Sector for Cooperation with CSOs. Reference #: EuropeAid/138096/IH/SER/TR

⁷⁷ The contract included in the evaluation sample: 370-752

⁷⁸ The contracts in the evaluation sample: 332-438 and 352-923

The TA services provide highly flexible and rapid responses, to assist a high number of rights-based CSOs and/or CSOs with rights-based activities as well as activists and informal platforms/networks initiatives.

The correlation between the CSF objectives and priorities and the stated objectives of the funded projects are high in terms of capacity development to perform their roles as independent development actors and to promote of the structured participation of CSOs.

5. To what extent does the financial assistance respond to the specific needs of civil society in the targeted sectors?

CSF objectives and priorities are well reflected in the objectives of the funded projects. Initiating networks and platforms, strengthening capacities for joint action to enhance the role of civil society in policy formulation and legislative action, are clearly expressed in the Description of Actions of the Grant Projects. An improved environment for active citizenship and strengthening of the capacity of organised active citizens, formulated as the objective of the TA contract, also reflects the CSF objectives.

The civil society priorities are duly reflected in the objectives of funded projects in the sample: a) structured networking is needed, to ensure a common approach and complementary strategies among the CSOs targeting the same or similar groups, and to give a stronger voice to civil society; b) to design and implement activities that provide CSOs with the opportunity to convey their messages, raise awareness among their respective constituencies, and to promote active citizenship.

Needs of civil society are acknowledged in the relevant country and sector strategies and programmes, as well as in the discourse of relevant actors. However the process to improve legislation is progressing slowly, especially after the attempted coup in 2016.

The CSF ensures the crucial possibility for the EU to conceive, programme and implement an independent, civil society support instrument, in particular in the current institutional context of the country. However, the fact that the CSF is managed centrally without any links to the national programme, may be considered a major gap in providing a more holistic response to the specific needs of civil society in Turkey. Unlike the other IPA countries the National IPA program in Turkey involves specific support for capacity development in the public institutions, as well as grant schemes where CSOs are eligible through which synergies may be created.

Efficiency

6. To what extent has the provided financial assistance reached grassroots and community-based organisations?

The introduction of the CSF in Turkey has provided support to smaller organisations through membership in the networks and platforms established through the grant scheme. However, the budget allocated for the introduction of a micro-grant scheme EuropeAid/134367/L/ACT/TR was transferred to the networks and platforms component of the CSF-Turkey due to the absence of applications. Furthermore additional funds for the second phase of Sivil Düşün I was allocated to meet the huge number of applications.

Reaching not only the grassroots and community-based organisations but also activists, civil initiatives/platforms was possible to a large extent through the Active Citizenship Mechanism of the TA project Sivil Düşün, which provides in-kind support of 5,000-10,000 € to civil structures, using greatly simplified and flexible procedures.

The concept and design of the Active Citizenship Mechanism of Sivil Düşün Programme is highly innovative, even ground-breaking. The programme does not have a selection process other than an administrative control. There are no thematic or geographic quotas, and "first comes first served" is the principle used to fund an activity. All segments of civil society, registered as well as unregistered individuals/structures, are eligible to apply. Activities of rights-based

organisations and/or activities that are rights-based are eligible for support. Extensive help desk services are provided to applicants and beneficiaries at all stages, starting with the application process through to the end of the supported activity. The programme structure is flexible to respond to the different and changing needs of civil society. The quantitative targets are surpassed by 50% and the 94% of the allocated budget was spent, despite a period of stagnation after the attempted coup. Although of a systematic monitoring structure is not embedded in the design, activities are reported and observed to be highly relevant, efficient and effective.

Through the Active Citizenship Mechanism of Sivil Düşün I and Sivil Düşün II; around 500 activities covering all themes have been supported. The activities consist of diverse interventions by organisations and activists/initiatives/platforms ranging from infrastructure support for organisational strengthening, to support for travel, to organisation of special events/meetings/conferences and production of documentaries and books.

The concept and design of the projects selected under the network and platforms grant scheme are logical. Their relevance is high and the implementation is efficient. The results formulated as outputs are fully achieved. However, the current socio-political environment in the country is not conducive to creating strong impacts.

7. To what extent has DG NEAR used an appropriate mix of funding instruments to reach the stated objectives of CSF support?

CSF Turkey makes use of two instruments to fund CSOs: Action Grants and a TA initiative, designed as an in-kind support scheme to CSOs.

The thematic fields of the grant projects are social inclusion, good governance, the rule of law and capacity building. The funded organisations under the action grants are relatively advanced CSOs that can assume leading roles in initiating networks/platforms in their respective fields. The design and implementation of two projects in the evaluation sample is highly inclusive, through which smaller and less experienced CSOs representing different target groups relevant to the field of intervention are actively involved in project activities. The Calls for action grants, and the in-kind support through the Active Citizenship Mechanism, address the needs and constraints of civil society to a large extent in conformity with the level of different needs addressed by the two instruments.

As explained above, there is a synergy between the two instruments, and complementarity of Active Citizenship Mechanism is very high, both for the action grants and all other donor funded activities in Turkey.

8. To what extent is the provided financial assistance flexible enough to respond to changing needs?

As explained above, the EUD in Ankara has responded to the assessed needs through a highly innovative and flexible intervention to provide in-kind assistance through Active Citizenship Mechanism of Sivil Düşün. In fact, the interaction between the EUD and funded organisations is strong, considering that some are Steering Committee members of the Sivil Düşün Programme. The complementary use of financial assistance through the networks and platform CfP and EIDHR further supports the rights-based civil structures to continue functioning.

Further assistance in the form of operating grants is planned under the 2016-2017 programming. The programme will be implemented through the STGM (Civil Society Development Center). This support is highly needed as the CSOs in Turkey are going through a difficult stage, where their space is shrinking in all aspects. The social-political environment is supportive neither of systematic participation in decision-making nor of civic activism. Even service-providing CSOs are facing difficulties in carrying out planned activities and/or ensuring their financial and institutional sustainability. Future planning may need to take into consideration the currently deteriorating environment in which civil society is trying to survive and operate through tools to increase the resilience of the organisations and structures in a time of uncertainty.

Effectiveness

9. To what extent is the financial assistance contributing to addressing the needs and priorities of the civil society sector? (Focus on civil society)

No doubt, CSF assistance makes a significant contribution to civil society development. The capacity of CSOs, in terms of knowledge, practices and skills, have significantly improved. CSF assistance has provided opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of the potential role of civil society as partners in the development process.

A large segment of civil society is well informed about the national strategies, policies, action plans and civil society development strategies. The links are evident in the approaches adopted by organisations. However there is little room for civil society to assume a significant role in the implementation, monitoring and updating of national strategies and plans, and in the best case their involvement is limited to consultation.

10. To what extent is the financial assistance contributing to achievement of CSF's stated strategic objectives and priorities? (Focus on the CSF itself)

In Turkey, through the CSF grant scheme, the financial assistance has contributed to establishing networks with the capacity to participate in public debate, to reflect the views of citizens, and to perform monitoring of the reform process in their respective sectors. The networks have supported the interaction between CSOs with different capacities, knowledge and experience, which allowed an in-depth and holistic understanding of the various aspects of the real situation and its implications on democracy, human rights, social inclusion and the rule of law.

In-kind support provided by the Active Citizenship Mechanism of the Sivil Düşün Programme has reached out to activists/initiatives/platforms and grassroots CSOs in urban and rural areas.

The financial assistance of the CSF has increased the interaction between CSOs but did not contribute significantly to ensuring a greater benefit for civil society from national legal and financial frameworks, or to ensuring dialogue with the state institutions. But as explained above; whereas the CSF funded projects base their work on EU best practices in the field of human rights, EU *acquis* policy areas are covered under a number of programmes, including grant schemes where CSOs are eligible, in the National IPA programme.

11. To what extent are the different implementation instruments effective in providing support to civil society?

The CSF CfPs in Turkey allow for a selection of diverse thematic grants. The fact that the support provided by Active Citizenship Mechanism of Sivil Düşün has no thematic priority or quota also helps to enrich the thematic content of the interventions.

The minimum and maximum budgets of the CfPs for action grants funded by the EU require the management experience and skills of CSOs with higher capacity. However, networking as the focus of the call has allowed the participation of smaller and less experienced CSOs in the project implementation. On the other hand, the eligibility criteria with no thematic focus has rendered the activity portfolio of Sivil Düşün Active Citizenship Mechanism highly diverse in terms of types and size of funded organisations, individuals and other civil structures.

The CfPs under the Networks and Platforms Grant Scheme and Sivil Düşün Active Citizenship Mechanism address civil society needs and constraints as identified in EU and national strategies and policies.

Impact**12. What have been the impacts of the CSF to date?**

It is difficult to compare the action grants and the in-kind support under the Sivil Düşün Programme in terms of the extent of impacts in certain thematic areas. Action grants are designed for an implementation period of two years, with a budget range of 150,000 – 350,000 €. Activities supported by Sivil Düşün Active Citizenship Mechanism have a maximum budget of 10,000 € with a highly flexible implementation duration depending on the type of activity.

Both instruments, regardless of their thematic scope, have enhanced the capacity of civil society to participate in public debate on democracy, human rights, social inclusion and the rule of law.

However CSO capacity to influence policy and decision-making processes is difficult to assess due to the current environment in Turkey. The current situation leaves room for improvement in terms of ensuring an enabling environment in which civil society can raise its voice on democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It may participate more easily in the debate on social inclusion, where national strategies acknowledge the role of civil society in developing and monitoring strategies and action plans.

It is worth noting the innovative approach of Sivil Düşün titled 'Civil Space' that has been introduced in the northern part of Cyprus⁷⁹.

13. Are regional networks funded through the CSF effectively advocating for policy reforms in Turkey?

The involvement of more experienced CSOs in regional networks is higher. Of the 102 multi-beneficiary projects 29 are implemented in all IPA countries (WB+T) and CSOs from Turkey are participating in 12 multi-country projects. However, the field observations imply that, possibly due to the political context in the country, which has prevailed these last years, regional networks are not considered a priority.

Detailed discussions about regional networks are found in the Multi-beneficiary and Regional Project Evaluation Matrix, which can be found at Annex/ Appendix 9.

14. What factors are there, which contribute to or hamper impact?

Major external factors that impeded the impact prospects are described in the 2016 Turkey Progress Report: "Civil society remained active and involved in public life under difficult circumstances. Human rights defenders were subject to intimidation and detentions. A large number of organisations were closed as part of the post-coup measures taken by the government. Systematic and inclusive mechanisms for consulting civil society, notably on new legislation, need to be put in place and consistently used. The legal, financial and administrative environment needs to be more conducive to the development of civil society" (page 12).

Currently, there are no significant indications of a change in the political and legal environment. The state of emergency continues and CSOs are facing difficulties in making long-term plans for their institutional and financial sustainability in line with their visions and missions.

The fact that the CSF design, as a centrally implemented programme, does not seek the active involvement of national institutions responsible of coordinating/implementing the National IPA programme under the de-centralized implementation system may lead to missed opportunities in terms of complementarity and synergies. Such communication, to enhance the understanding of the CSF design and to discuss bottlenecks, may help to improve the legal framework in which civil society operates. The experience of national institutions gained through the Civil Society Dialogue projects, TA projects for line ministries involving grant schemes eligible for CSOs implemented using IPA funds, may provide a favourable ground to produce the much needed impact.

⁷⁹ <http://www.civicspace.eu>

Sustainability
15. To what extent are the impacts noted to date sustainable and likely to continue producing effects after the end of CSF assistance?
<p>The results achieved in the framework of CSF funded projects/actions in Turkey are sustainable in terms of actions and outputs. The organisations funded under the action grants have clear visions and an in-depth understanding of their mission. Most organisations that received in-kind support also have their strategies in place. However, the current state of uncertainty, if it deteriorates, may threaten the prospects of sustainability.</p> <p>CSF assistance has enhanced CSO capacity to plan and implement actions in an effective and accountable manner.</p>
Cross-cutting Issues (gender and human rights)
16. Is there a sufficient and effective focus in CSF funding on human rights and gender equality?
<p>In the particular context of Turkey, there are few of projects (contracts) funded under the CSF (13, i.e. about 3.5% of the total number of projects), in particular when taking into consideration the size of the country and the challenges in this domain. Nevertheless, it can be seen from the structure of the national projects that a significant share is focused on human rights and gender equality, within a generic thematic field of social inclusion.</p>
Environment
17. Is there a sufficient and effective focus in CSF guidelines on the environment?
<p>There are not any national CSF funded projects focused on the environment in Turkey and the ratio of activities supported under the Sivil Düşün Active Citizenship Mechanism in this field is low.</p> <p>However, within the wider range of multi-beneficiary projects, one project where the lead applicant is the local office of an international CSO has reached out to grassroots organisations working for environmental protection in Turkey.</p>
Coherence, Coordination and Consistency
18. To what extent are the different national and regional actions of the CSF programme coherent/ complementing/ overlapping?
<p>No particular overlap has been observed but it remains that tighter coordination and search of complementarities should be set up, including synergies in certain domains.</p>
19. To what extent do supported projects ensure fulfilment of the visibility strategy set by the European Commission?
<p>CSF-funded projects have been implemented in absence of an updated and reinforced manual on EU visibility guidelines, with a particular focus on the specific facets of the civil society projects. It has been underlined, in the process of preparing the IPA II Monitoring, Reporting and Performance Framework, that small, local and grassroots organisations can and should provide an optimal vector and leverage for qualitative reinforcement of EU communication and visibility, whether in civil society, local economic development or cross-border cooperation projects, and this opportunity has not yet been addressed by the current visibility guidelines. This may obviously be of particular importance in the specific situation of Turkey, and the widely “capillary” outreach of Sivil Düşün II, supporting even non-registered “micro CSOs”.</p>

Generally taken, this question has a particular and crucial weight in the current context of IPA II, which calls for a more pragmatic, incisive and “visible” information in order to raise the general public awareness about the EU’s strategy, role and contributions, and this beyond the mere opinions of the technocrats involved in this domain. All these challenges take a particular proportion in Turkey today.

It is certain that this weakness or shortcoming could be improved (only) if the overall process of coordination and cooperation between the Government and the EU could be initiated, if possible, due to current circumstances, and affecting the independent character of the centrally managed CSF in the country.

Added Value

20. What value is added to the work and initiatives of Turkey, compared to that which might be achieved without the contributions of the CSF?

As explicit in the design of the CSF Turkey window, the assistance targeting fields of intervention and segments of civil society for which funding/support would be difficult, if not impossible, to obtain from other sources, implies a high added value for the civil society in Turkey.

Coordination with national/municipal initiatives, though not systematically monitored, is ensured within the framework of interaction in the networks and platforms.

There are cases where actions implemented through the Active Citizenship Mechanism of Sivil Düşün also have facilitated enhance capacities to participate in national and municipal initiatives, including projects implemented under National IPA.

7.9.5 Conclusions

Relevance

It is obvious that the situation of the CS in Turkey is very different from other IPA countries, with absence of any comprehensive CS – Government dialogue, and, since one year now (July 2016), strong confrontation and extreme difficulties for certain rights-based CSOs to pursue their activities. The EU’s support needs thus to be viewed within this very difficult context, which certainly explains why the CSF has been concentrated and “polarised” on several platforms or organizations only; it is thus assumed that this has been the only way to maintain and deliver CSF support using the leverage of these platforms and organizations, instead of launching fruitless CfPs, wasting opportunities, time and funding.

One can therefore conclude that (national) CSF in Turkey has demonstrated its relevance and appropriate design, in order to provide an effective EU’s support to the civil society in the country, by means of centrally managed instrument not subject to any influence and interference by the Government. It is true that this concentration of funding has not allowed to deploy in Turkey a fuller array of the available CSF implementation instruments and, most certainly, to intervene deeper on certain politically very sensitive issues.

Efficiency

For the specific reasons stressed above it is not possible to assess the CSF’s efficiency in Turkey in the same way as this could be done in other IPA countries, and can be basically observed in the performance of the ongoing Sivil Düşün project which has managed to support a very wide range of small, micro and individual CS organizations and actors, in an overall environment of lack of perspective and even of security for certain (rights-based in particular) actors due to the ongoing repressive action of the government.

Effectiveness

Considering again these specific (and unforeseeable) circumstances, it can be considered that CSF has been effective, and has demonstrated fairly high flexibility in trying to adapt to a new situation marked by confrontation between the CS community and the authorities. The known planned next steps – pursuance of Sivil Düşün into its 3rd phase and with the same contractual set up, and placing the STGM in a pivotal position of a central national CS platform (including its future role of TACSO III National Resource Centre), are expected to further consolidate the current CSF's approach, in the short and medium term.

Impact and Sustainability

The situation in the country is highly evolving and one cannot exclude further heavier repression of the CS community, which would without any doubt seriously weigh on the “raison d'être”, the efficiency and the effectiveness not only of CSF but of the overall EU's cooperation with Turkey in general. It is therefore premature to come up with any conclusive statements concerning the impact, let alone sustainability; the current presence, role and contribution of CSF is definitely viewed as a positive effect, encouraging the CS, and could constitute a solid basis for stronger and wider involvement by deploying a full-fledged CSF (all implementation instruments, full range of thematic fields) if and when the major institutional conditionalities would allow for that.

Cross-cutting areas

There are no particular conclusions concerning environment, due also to the relatively narrow thematic coverage in the country; one can nevertheless note a very good performance of an IPA-wide environment project, managed by the TR branch of WWF. As for human rights, this is certainly the core issue and CSF could provide its contribution to the extent possible, in particular via the coverage and outreach of Sivil Düşün.

Coherence

There are no specific “Turkey” aspects of coherence that need to be highlighted, and the general conclusions on that level are fully applicable for this country.

Visibility

The general conclusions concerning the EU's visibility in general and visibility of CSF in particular are valid for Turkey too. There is nevertheless one major visibility issue in Turkey, which has introduced confusion and lack of appropriate understanding of the scope and the objectives of the EU's support via CSF. “Sivil Düşün”, initially identified as a brand name for CSF Turkey has, in time, gained a wide acceptance among the civil society to describe the Active Citizenship Mechanism of the TA. The dynamic nature of the Active Citizenship Mechanism and the intensity and quality of its communication tools further reinforce this perception, leading to a situation where the visibility of EU is undermined. There is a clear need for revisiting the communication and visibility strategy of the CSF-Turkey programme as a whole.

7.9.6 Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the EUD, together with DG NEAR, improve monitoring and evaluation of the CSF through the introduction of SMART indicators at all levels of results. Further, it is recommended that the EUD initiate project evaluations, particularly where projects are larger, and/ or longer.
2. It is recommended the EUD safeguard the actual flexibility of the CSF in order, in particular, to adapt it in a timely manner to any major changes in the overall institutional and political environment in which the Turkish CSOs are obliged to operate today.
3. It is recommended the EUD, without endangering the independence of the CSF as a centrally-managed facility, consider establishing a line of dialogue and consultation with other CS support programmes under the National IPA to ensure a harmonized approach, to produce a higher impact toward creating an enabling environment, and to accelerate progress towards development goals.

4. It is recommended the EUD, together with other EUDs in the region, and DG NEAR, introduce a revised approach to developing effective visibility approaches for supported actions. Some planning for these visibility processes will need to take place at the regional level (to be then implemented by funded organisations), and some will be the direct responsibility of funded organisations. A particular component of this in Turkey will be to plan the needed visibility and awareness-building actions in order to highlight the CSF as a whole and neutralize the confusion created by the above mentioned “Sivil Düşün effect”.
5. It is recommended that the EUD include inception phase in all projects of longer duration (3+years).
6. It is recommended that the EUD engage in a process with DG NEAR and other EUDs, to further develop requirements and frameworks for the inclusion of human rights and gender as cross-cutting themes. A specific focus of this recommendations is to develop particular assistance for CSOs, to ensure they understand both the intent of, and the potential outcomes of this focus.

7.10 Annex/ Appendix 10 - Evaluation Matrix – Multi-beneficiary and Regional Projects

7.10.1 Fieldwork Implementation

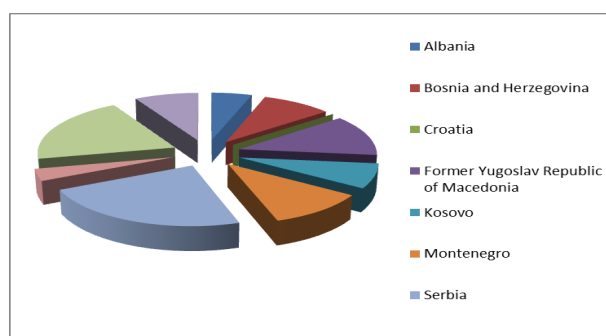
The evaluation fieldwork related to multi-beneficiary and regional projects was implemented during the period 15 May to 14 June, by the evaluation team leader and one key expert. Fieldwork consisted of a number of face-to-face interviews in Brussels and Serbia, and a number of Skype and telephone interviews with beneficiary representatives in a number of different countries in Europe.

7.10.2 Overall Portfolio

The overall structure of the CSF portfolio 2011 – 2016 covered by the evaluation is shown below, as presented in the Inception Report (source: current CSF database).

Geographical Focus	Number of Contracts	Total EU Budget
Albania	19	EUR 6,087,544
BiH	33	EUR 12,912,470
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	45	EUR 9,911,482
Kosovo	27	EUR 8,544,842
Montenegro	39	EUR 6,688,387
Serbia	84	EUR 12,600,920
Turkey	13	EUR 11,058,604
WB and Turkey ⁸⁰	29	EUR 27,960,887
Multi-beneficiary ⁸¹	73	EUR 35,055,931
Total	362	EUR 130,821,066

The breakdown of projects shows a relatively high share of Serbia (84 projects), followed by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (45) and Montenegro (39) and a considerably smaller number of projects in Turkey (13). It has nevertheless to be noted that the average EU budget of the projects in Turkey is considerably higher the overall average. The multi-beneficiary (multi-country and WBT) projects represent a significant share of the total (102).



⁸⁰ This description is for contracts/ projects which focus on ALL countries in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

⁸¹ This description is for contracts/ projects which focus on more than one beneficiary country (but NOT all countries).

The CSF portfolio of multi-beneficiary (73) and WB & Turkey (29) projects funded in the 2011 – 2016 period has had the following structure by theme (total and average budget figures in Euros):

Overall Structure of CSF-funded Projects 2011 – 2016 by Theme

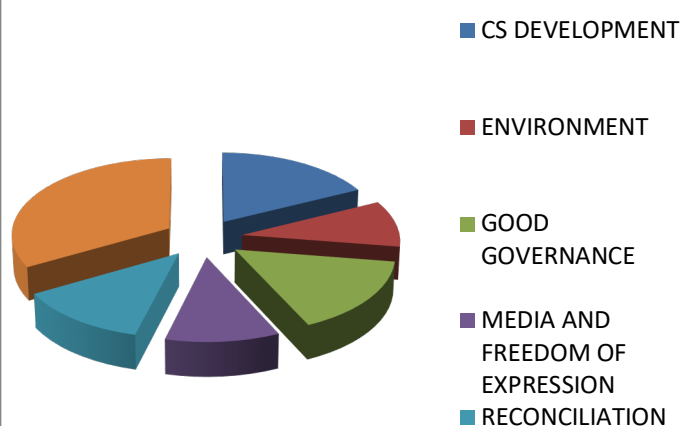
	Number	Percentage
CS DEVELOPMENT	18	18
ENVIRONMENT	10	10
GOOD GOVERNANCE	16	16
MEDIA AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION	11	11
RECONCILIATION	13	13
SOCIAL INCLUSION	34	33
TOTAL CSF 2011-2016	102	100

By implementation instrument, this structure is as follows:

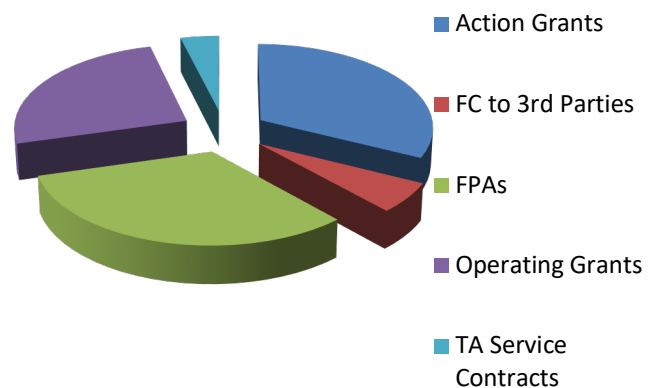
Overall Structure of CSF-funded Multi-beneficiary and WB & Turkey Projects 2011 – 2016 by Implementation Instrument

	Number	Percentage
Action Grants	33	32
FC to 3rd Parties	6	6
FPA's	33	32
Operating Grants	26	25
TA Service Contracts	4	4
Total	102	100

Breakdown by Thematic Field



Breakdown by Implementation Instrument



The retained sample of multi-beneficiary and WB & Turkey projects comprises 23 projects, i.e. about 23% of their total number. It comprises 17 multi-beneficiary projects (76% of the total) and 5 WB & Turkey projects (22%). It has the following basic characteristics, being stated that is fully proportional to the global portfolio (share of projects by thematic field and by implementation instruments):

Breakdown by Thematic Fields

	Number	Percent
CS DEVELOPMENT	4	17
ENVIRONMENT	2	9
GOOD GOVERNANCE	4	17
MEDIA AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION	3	13
RECONCILIATION	2	9
SOCIAL INCLUSION	8	35
TOTAL	23	100

Breakdown by Implementation Instrument

	Number	Percent
Action Grants	10	43
FC to 3rd Parties	2	9
FPA's	6	26
Operating Grants	4	17
TA Service Contracts	1	4
TOTAL	23	100

7.10.3 CSF Evaluation – Sample of Multi-beneficiary and WB & Turkey Project

Contract Number	Project Title	Geographical Focus	Thematic Focus	Implementation Instrument
Short, medium and long-term action grants – Multi-beneficiary				
332758	Civic Response to Clientelism in Media -MEDIA CIRCLE	Multi-beneficiary	Media and freedom of expression	Short, medium and long-term action grants
369846	Western Balkan's Regional Platform for Advocating Media Freedom and journalists' safety	Multi-beneficiary	Media and freedom of expression	Short, medium and long-term action grants
370038	WeBER - Western Balkans Enabling Project for Civil Society Monitoring of Public Administration Reform	Multi-beneficiary	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Short, medium and long-term action grants
370114	SE Europe Transnational CSO Coalition for Women and Child Protection Against Human Trafficking and Gender-based Violence - STOP	Multi-beneficiary	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
370287	Taking action on social inclusion of older people	Multi-beneficiary	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
370394	Youth Banks Hubs or Western Balkans and Turkey	Multi-beneficiary	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
364189	Strengthening the RECOM Process (Phase II)	Multi-beneficiary	Reconciliation and cultural dialogue	Short, medium and long-term action grants (exception)
370628	ARYSE (At-Risk Youth Social Empowerment)	Multi-beneficiary	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
371198	Civil Society acts for environmentally sound socio-economic development	Multi-beneficiary	Environment, climate action, energy and agriculture	Short, medium and long-term action grants
370300	Joint initiative to Empower Roma Civil Society on the Western Balkans and Turkey	(WB and Turkey)	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Short, medium and long-term action grants
370371	ALTER - Active Local Territories for Economic Development of Rural Areas	WB and Turkey	Civil society development and local democracy	Short, medium and long-term action grants
Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs)				
306161	Towards efficient public Procurement Mechanisms in the EU (potential) Candidate Countries	Multi-beneficiary	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs)
306172	Sign for Sustainability	Multi-beneficiary	Civil society development and local democracy	Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs)
306530	Improving the Provision of Social Service Delivery in South Eastern Europe through the empowerment of national and regional CSO networks	Multi-beneficiary	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs)

Contract Number	Project Title	Geographical Focus	Thematic Focus	Implementation Instrument
306649	PERSON (Partnership to Ensure Reform of Support in other Nations)	Multi-beneficiary	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Framework Agreements (FPAs) Partnership
307460	South East Europe Sustainable Energy Policy or SEE SEP	Multi-beneficiary	Environment, climate action, energy and agriculture	Framework Agreements (FPAs) Partnership
307476	Civil Society for Good Governance and Anti-Corruption in Southeast Europe: Capacity Building for Monitoring, Advocacy and Awareness Raising	WB and Turkey	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Framework Agreements (FPAs) Partnership
Operating grants				
351845	Regional Youth Exchange Association	Multi-beneficiary	Reconciliation and cultural dialogue	Operating grants
351847	European Integration and the social dimension: strengthening regional cooperation of trade unions in the Balkans	Multi-beneficiary	Civil society development and local democracy	Operating grants
351850	Western Balkans Pulse for Police Integrity and Trust (POINT)	Multi-beneficiary	Good governance (including PAR, rule of law, anti-corruption)	Operating grants
351960	Towards a Western Balkans and Turkey LGBTI Human Rights Regional Association	WB and Turkey	Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	Operating grants
Direct grants to International Organisations and CSOs				
305617	Media Accountability in South East Europe	Multi-beneficiary	Media and freedom of expression	Direct grants to International Organisations and CSOs
Technical Assistance				
325596	Technical Assistance to the Civil Society Organisations (TACSO 2) from the IPA beneficiaries (1/2) + P2P	WB and Turkey	Civil society development and local democracy	Technical Assistance (TACSO + TA for Gov/EC,EUD) and regional and national events, study visits (P2P programme)

7.10.4 Evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations Concerning Multi-beneficiary and WB & Turkey Projects

The evaluation findings presented in the country annexes are placed within the approved evaluation matrix and thus all follow the same sequence:

Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Relevance – programming level	EQ 1 – EQ 3
Relevance – project level	EQ 4 – EQ 5
Efficiency	EQ 6 – EQ 8
Effectiveness	EQ 9 – EQ 11
Impact	EQ 12 – EQ 14
Sustainability	EQ 15
Cross-cutting Issues – Gender and Human Rights	EQ 16
Cross-cutting issues - Environment	EQ 17
Coherence, coordination and consistency	EQ 18 – EQ 19
Added Value	EQ 20
Lessons Learnt	EQ 21

The projects cited as examples in the findings of the assessment of the sample of multi-beneficiary and WB & Turkey projects are numbered from 1 to 23, corresponding to their number in the sample list above. These findings are followed by a synthesis in form of conclusions and recommendations. It is underlined that the findings and conclusions solely refer to sample component of the multi-beneficiary and WB & Turkey projects, and are not to be taken as general ones, on the level of CSF as a whole.

7.10.5 Responses to evaluation questions from the perspective of multi-beneficiary and regional projects

Responses
Relevance – Programming Level
1. To what extent are the defined objectives of the CSF relevant?
<p>There is a clear relevance to CSF objectives, in the context of the EC Enlargement Strategy, as well as in the objectives and priorities of country strategy and policy documents and programmes, and to the content, analysis and priorities of Country Reports. The region is undergoing significant change in the process of democratisation and reforms toward EU accession.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CSF was set up with well-thought-through objectives, and policy priorities, and a strong intent to link policy initiatives and the funding assistance. The Enlargement Strategy is very visible, as is the Copenhagen Criteria for accession. • At the policy level, support has been stipulated in several key documents, including national strategies and action plans. • The Guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries (2014-2020)⁸² are a key framework for DG NEAR and EUDs in the formulation of directions and plans. A related, specific set of guidelines for media have been drafted and are used in programming. • The Guidelines are monitored systematically, with input sought from all relevant civil society and other national stakeholders. • There is a clearly stated and visible intent to maintain a link between the Guidelines and the priorities of Calls for Proposals. • Coordination and the participatory approach to policy and strategy formulation and programming for CSO's has in general been significantly improved and reinforced under IPA. • The programme has a clear focus on dialogue between public authorities and civil society, and all Western Balkans countries and Turkey have adopted legislation that acknowledges the role of CSOs in a participatory democracy. • The region is undergoing significant change in the process of democratisation and reforms toward EU accession. • Initiatives funded by the CSF (e.g. TACSO) have provided strategic guidance towards establishing a structured dialogue between CSOs, operating structures and EU Delegations. • The CSF remains relevant in all the beneficiary countries and provides strategic guidance towards establishing a structured dialogue between CSOs, operating structures and EU Delegations. • The initiative is fully in line with national sector specific policies and is addressing the importance for civil society to be empowered and fully functional.

⁸² Guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries, 2014-2020, DG Enlargement

Responses

- Coordination and the participatory approach to policy and strategy formulation and programming for CSOs has been significantly improved and reinforced under IPA.
- There is a well-understood similarity to the situations of the beneficiary countries, particularly in the Western Balkans, and it is recognised that the priorities and objectives of the CSF are able to be relevant across the region because of this similarity.

Some questions remain as to programme relevance:

- There is a disconnect, noted in most beneficiary countries, between the *form* of the enabling environment (which tends to be good) and the actual contribution of national administrations to the growth and development of civil society (which is much less 'enabling' than the form would indicate). While the Guidelines are just that, guidelines, a consistent application of an 'enabling environment' would benefit greatly from a stronger application of the Guidelines' framework in beneficiary countries: 'In the strategic documents, everything is fine, but in reality, this is not the reality.'
- CSO involvement in Accession processes and integration processes – related to the point on enabling involvement, substantive engagement of CSOs in Accession processes is not consistent across beneficiary countries.
- Despite development of relevant regulations, in some countries concerns remain about the willingness of governments to provide support to developing CSO capacity and to allow CSOs to fully participate in the design and implementation of national development strategies. While these concerns extend to the full range of democratic reforms, what is particularly relevant to CSF frameworks and priorities is ensuring a more active support to the engagement of civil society in national-level conversations on priorities and processes of democratic reform and EU Accession.

2. To what extent are objectives at different levels (strategic, MIPDs and programmes) clear, measurable and realistic?

CSF Objectives are generally clear and realistic, and Priorities are well aligned with the needs of civil society in the country – capacity building, dialogue with authorities and empowerment. However, they need further elaboration in order to render them measurable, including introduction of SMART indicators, at all levels. This should be reflected in the CSF programming documents, in its future database and, more explicitly, in the conditions of its tenders (service contracts) and calls for proposals (grant contracts).

There is no systematic presence of intervention logic parameters and indicators, which renders follow-up, monitoring and evaluations more difficult and does not allow for any benchmarking and assessments on result achievement (performance as per the EU's Results Framework) of the Instrument as a whole, and of the individual projects it has funded.

3. To what extent does programming take adequate and relevant account of assistance provided and reforms promoted by other (key) donors? (also pertinent to discussions of coordination/ complementarity)?

There are a range of mechanisms that are used in CSF design and implementation that are focused on ensuring effective linkages between CSF priorities and funding and those of other key donors. These include:

- At the structural level there is a well-founded and well-implemented coordination process across Member States and the EC in relation to the CSF. This is most notable in the agreement on the priorities and funding of the CSF prior to the Commission approving plans and funding.

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- This coordination is also visible in discussions regarding the Guidelines, and the input received from other donors (Member States) prior to finalisation of the Guidelines.
- Coordination is also particularly visible in the commitment to EU Accession frameworks and prioritisation that is made by other key donors in their own planning and giving.

Having said this, there are a number of areas in which these processes could be strengthened, in order to improve both coordination and outcomes.

- Specific activities of 'donor coordination' are more visible within beneficiary countries, i.e., between EUDs and national authorities. These activities do not take place in Brussels.
- Donor coordination tends to be 'passive' - it is noted from all sides that it is more about sharing what is being done or has been done than any real focus on coordinating and correlating strategies and activities to ensure greater results.
- Specific mention is made of the possibility of better systems/ approaches/ processes for the use of bilateral funding for co-financing requirements – formal discussions, strategies, etc.

Relevance - Project Level

4. To what extent has the use of the financial assistance to civil society been consistent with the objectives of the EU's support to civil society within the Enlargement Strategy?

There are a number of systems and processes in place that a) ensure links between the objectives of the EU's support to civil society and civil society itself. Further, these systems and processes (consultations, negotiations, conferences, discussions) work both 'up and down' in the process of informing, and in determining directions and priorities. In this context, there tends to be a significant correlation between the objectives of EU support and the activities and results of funded projects.

- As part of EU approximation processes, Western Balkans countries have begun developing anti-corruption systems, although the changes tend to be formalistic, and without sufficient consultation with CSOs and citizens. Some regional initiatives focus on improvements in this area.
- One regional initiative builds competition between different countries in how they address corruption in procurement systems, noting that none of the countries of the Western Balkans wants to be seen to be less good at addressing this area than any of their neighbours.
- One outcome is a strategy that contributes to improvements in the area of public procurement in Western Balkans countries aspiring to open accession negotiations in which public procurements occupy an important place. On average, public procurements equal 10% of GDP, so transparent and accountable management of this segment of public expenditure is particular importance.
- Accession is seen as a transformative process, to which media programmes can contribute through quality journalism, through the functioning of certain principles: independence, quality, the shielding of media from authorities and interference and the development of self-regulatory systems.
- One relevant outcome that has been developed in terms of media accountability is the *Media Clientelism and Politicisation Index*. The tool enables monitoring of the media in areas of integrity and transparency.

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- Accession happens through dossiers, which have certain requirements. One dossier covers media, and one project is covering these requirements - a Code of Ethics, Principles and Self-regulation. Another media initiative is about accountability – dealing with issues to bring higher standards and innovation, and how the media has become not a tool in fighting corruption, but a tool of corruption itself.
- The issue of legal capacity is at the core of human rights – as the recognition as an equal before the law, with equal rights to make decisions and have those decisions respected and upheld by the legal system is a core right without which all other human rights become meaningless. One project lies squarely within this: ensuring a more dynamic civil society actively participating in public debate on democracy, human rights, social inclusion and the rule of law and with capacity to influence policy and decision making processes.
- One initiative creates methodologies that can be applied by other interested organizations; conducts research the results of which can be used by stakeholders; creates evidence-based draft public policies; advocates reforms in the field of the fight against corruption.
- One project defines civil society indicators for PAR, which is done in cooperation with PAR line ministries in all Western Balkan's countries.
- TACSO is seen as a tool for developing institutional capacity and achieving maturity within national, institutional CSO support partners.
- Together with TACSO Technical Assistance, People to People is recognised as contributing expertise (and experts themselves) on specific topics, in ways that clearly contribute to the development of technical, organisational and thematic knowledge and skills.

Some questions remain as to programme relevance at the project level:

- The intent of the CSF to develop civil society is really strong, but there is a missing link, with civil society as opposed to CSOs. The focus on CSOs is so great that it can get in the way of EU/ EUD/ DG NEAR dialogue with civil society per se.
- Related to this is the need for CSOs to look not towards the donor, but to ensure a focus on the citizens/ population they serve, in order to be certain about need, and the focus of priorities.
- Links between IPA sectoral approaches and strategies are not consistently applied across beneficiary countries. Albania's approach is worth noting here, in how the EUD has structurally linked assigned sectoral responsibilities with CSF-funded projects in the related sector.
- Some disconnect is noted between political support and financial support, i.e., there is not a consistent application of political support across a range of advocacy priorities, even where those advocacy priorities a clear priorities of CSF funding and CSF-funded projects.
- There is an expressed concern about ensuring/ maintaining the balance between the focus on Accession, and engagement in Accession and related processes by CSOs, and the focus on a self-determination of CSO needs/ priorities (a dynamic civil society).
- The perspective of the EC in relation to the status of democratic development in the Western Balkans does not seem to be in complete alignment with the view of CSOs in the region, who view the EU's approach as 'soft pedalling' on necessary reforms in the areas of governance and rule of law, and who feel much more political support is required from the EU if real reform is to happen. 'I am not sure that the CSF recognises the changes in the political environment in the region at the moment.' 'Conflicts are the next step – tensions are visible now, and the region is not democratic, with developed institutions able to drive a democracy.'

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- In this context, encouragement to organisations/ projects that are not seen as being in ‘partnership’ with government should not be discouraged, and initiatives that make strong contributions to the actual strengthening of Accession processes would benefit from the knowledge that they can count of EU support, political and financial, over a sufficiently long period to ensure efforts reach sustainable goals.

5. To what extent does the financial assistance respond to the specific needs of civil society in the targeted sectors?

The aims, objectives and activities of the multi-beneficiary and regional projects funded by the CSF’s financial assistance are very closely aligned to the overall objectives of the CSF. CSOs, in delivering their projects, contribute strongly to CSF objectives and to the overall objectives of the EC in relation to civil society development. There is significant focus on accountability and credibility, on dialogue and the strengthening of ties between CSOs in the region, on the transfer of knowledge and skills, on EU Accession activities and on development of democratic processes and citizen engagement. All these areas of focus are visible across the range of funded projects.

- The critical nature of CSF funding is that there is only a very limited supply of other funds for civil society organisations in the region. Bilateral donors are leaving, and where they remain they tend to have both restrained priorities and reduced budgets. National funds are extremely limited, and are often not available to the broad range of CSOs. On the one hand, significant percentages of national funding in all beneficiary countries is directed at sporting and religious organisations, whereas on the other hand, while there can be an allocation such as exists in Serbia for the use of national funds as co-financing for the CSF, these funds have been continuously reduced in the past few years.
- The growing timeframes of support are visible, and very important. While true for all funded organisations, regional networks simply cannot become well-established and self-sustaining in three or 4 years, nor can legal reforms and policy initiatives achieve success in 1-3 years.
- The breadth of thematic focus, discussed in more detail below, is mentioned in the context of ‘response to specific needs’, as there is a very wide range of thematic support from the CSF. In this context, civil society notes the intent of the CSF to address a wide range of issues, and the consultation processes related to this commitment.
- However, networks note that even with the wide thematic approach, and with project timeframes being extended, there is absolutely no guarantee of sequencing – that is, a partnership cannot be certain that a new Call will come out in which they will ‘find themselves’. Approaches are needed to ensure that existing initiatives have the opportunity, in the lead-up to completion of existing funding arrangements, to access on-going funding based on demonstrated outcomes, demonstrated need and the relevance and importance of their initiative. Long-term support is important, but long-term excellence, of activity and results, is of greater importance.
- The flexibility of instruments, discussed in more detail below, is mentioned in the context of ‘response to specific needs’, as the focus on smaller organisations, focus on regional networks, focus on framework agreements and lengthening of time frames are all noted improvements in the structure and processes of the CSF, generally, and more specifically with regional and multi-beneficiary projects.
- Sub-granting approaches can be discussed using the word ‘significance’, as they are not just ‘important’. In the context of regional projects, framework partner agreements and sub-granting approaches can provide very similar activities and outcomes. Both encourage partnership and coalition, and each has particular importance in the development of the less well-experienced, smaller partner organisation. This is one of the key intents of this type of assistance – the development of smaller CSOs – and it is succeeding.

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- Reference is made to the importance of the CSF's support for LGBTI rights. CSF funding supports a regional LGBTI network that monitors developments with Chapter 23 negotiations, publishes shadow LGBTI reports and advocates directly in Brussels on behalf of the LGBTI community in the region. Having said this, Calls that specifically mention the rights of the LGBTI community are not visible, generally. The 'window of opportunity' for the LGBTI community is recognised as being open now, given the lack of opportunity for CSO development and engagement in regional countries such as Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia post-accession.
- One regional initiative addresses the specific objective of improving the capacity of CSO networks to give citizens with disabilities a voice, and this partnership has demonstrably influenced public reform processes related to legal capacity through research, strategic litigation and advocacy.
- RYCO, the Regional Youth Cooperation Office, has had direct benefit from the CSF, through assistance being provided in transferring experience and practical guidance, from an existing youth exchange initiative, to the developing RYCO.
- One funded initiative specifically focuses on assisting CSOs to diversify their funding base. This initiative is discussed in more detail in the Sustainability section below. There is great importance in this initiative, as it is both an acknowledgement by and a commitment from the CSF with regards to wider funding resources for beneficiary organisations. In the context of 'specific needs of civil society', it is important going forward to develop a strategic approach to financial sustainability, across the region and within the CSF.

Efficiency

6. To what extent has the provided financial assistance reached grassroots and community-based organisations?

The approach of DG NEAR and EUDs in recent years, and with recent Calls for Proposals, has had a clear focus on 'reach', i.e., grant assistance reaching down further into civil society and more widely, geographically. Key components of this approach, and focus on reach, include sub-granting mechanisms and framework partner agreements (often including a sub-granting component). While there are some aspects of this approach that need further work, the approach is clearly being effective. There is an inherent dilemma in the current emphasis on reach, and on sub-grants – should the focus be on reach, per se, or on the effectiveness of the grants. Further, but related, is that the current focus is having an impact on middle-sized CSOs, who struggle to respond to Calls where they would be required to lead a grant-giving project and are not able to find sufficient funding, or an acceptable focus, as sub-grantees.

The Framework Partner Agreements, as well as the regional networks built around long-term action grants, demonstrate an improved reach to smaller, grassroots and community-based organisations, although this is probably better exemplified in Calls issued nationally by EUDs.

It is understood that finding a balance between all areas of need, and types of grants, is difficult. The reality is that CSF funding is project-based, and for a fixed timeframe, and that there is a need to try and address the full range of needs through a diversity of modalities. The CSF is focused on reaching out, to smaller stakeholders and new stakeholders, and is developing and implementing innovative approaches, although there are organisational/administrative constraints, within DG NEAR as well as in the EUDs, as limited staffing constrains possibilities in terms of the numbers (and sizes) of awarded grants. The availability of action grants, framework partnership agreements, operating grants, all offer options for funding that can be of benefit to a variety of organisation.

Delays, with Calls and in assessing proposals, is a noted issue with the administration of the funding. While it is understood that conceiving, preparing, issuing and then managing a Call for Proposals is a complex and time-consuming activity, particularly where staffing is constrained as it is within DG NEAR, and greater complexity in types of grants means greater complexity in the administration of Calls and projects, for organisations who depend on CSF funding, even to a certain extent, and particularly for regional networks, delays anywhere along the process can be devastating. Specific questions were raised as to the actual

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process of application, award and reporting – both narrative and financial, and why these processes are not all done electronically. It is understood that other EU grant instruments have completely electronic processes, supported by a purpose-built database and portal.

Given the length of time between issuance of a Call for Proposals, assessment of applications and award, the prohibition on grantees varying their plans and activities is not effective or efficient. An 'inception phase', wherein aspects of a project's design, to address changes in the external situation, partner status or changes in knowledge and skills would assist organisations to better focus their actual activities and would improve outcomes across all levels.

While the value of providing funding to and through large UN Agencies is understood, from an administrative efficiency perspective, it is not so easily justified in terms of reach, effectiveness or cost-efficiency.

There are expressed concerns with the application of the co-financing requirements, particularly in large, regional partnerships where the amounts required can be significant. The geographic location, role and connections of lead applicants in this context take on a greater importance.

In summary:

- There is a good mix of instruments/ modalities, coupled with a real commitment in DG NEAR to the use of these instruments in an appropriate and effective way.
- Reach is improving, and there is a visible commitment to further improvements.
- There is a commitment to flexibility in Calls, and in grant administration, but levels of staffing and the inherent complexity of the EU's administrative and financial rules, are not supportive of any flexibility on the part of Task Managers.
- Improvements in *systems* of application and management would immediately benefit DG NEAR staff, and programme efficiency.
- Allowing for changes in project designs is appropriate, and is likely to have positive effects in terms of outputs and outcomes.

7. To what extent has DG NEAR used an appropriate mix of funding instruments to reach the stated objectives of CSF support?

The approach of DG NEAR, and across the CSF generally, has been to build a mix of approaches and implementing instruments as a way of achieving a better reach, as well as improving the effectiveness of approaches taken by funded organisations. The multi-beneficiary and regional 'portfolio' of the CSF includes long-term action grants, operating grants, framework partnership agreements, Direct Grants to International Organisations and CSOs and technical assistance, so in the context of a mix of funding, this area of the CSF covers the full range of possibilities. It is not just that the full range is covered, but that there is a clear intention to find appropriate approaches to improve reach and effectiveness.

There are a number of grant schemes operated by CSOs or foundations in the region, with CSF funding, that offer innovative and effective approaches to provision of assistance to CSOs of a variety of sizes, in a range of thematic areas and geographies. These approaches are visible in national CSF grants as well as regional and multi-beneficiary awards. There is significant room for replication and further development of these approaches. Further innovation in this area would also be appropriate.

There has been a steady growth in the potential length of grants, and this has been both noted and supported. While true across the CSF, regional initiatives in particular require a longer timeframe, specifically in those instances where the thematic area of network itself are new, or where the intent is to impact on policy frameworks or practice. In this context, the heavier emphasis on long-term action grants and other longer-term instruments is demonstrably effective.

There has been a notable focus on flexibility in the financial and timeframe frameworks for regional and multi-beneficiary grants. This flexibility should be encouraged, as the capacities, needs and areas of focus are wide.

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Too great a focus on financial support to international agencies does not ensure the most effective outcomes for development of civil society organisations in the region. The key point here is not the use, with regional and local CSOs, of the grants provided to these international organisations, but rather that the grants themselves might better serve the objectives of the CSF if there was a greater emphasis on their distribution to regionally-based CSOs or foundations, for significant sub-granting programmes. Further, these initiatives offer very little visibility for the EU contribution that funds them.

8. To what extent is the provided financial assistance flexible enough to respond to changing needs?

As is indicated in a number of places in this report, there is a notable flexibility in the approach taken by DG NEAR to the grant processes of the CSF with multi-beneficiary and regional projects. The flexibility is most notable in the development of new and innovative instruments for granting, the increase overall in the timeframe for grants, and the commitment to being responsive to the needs and priorities of CSOs in the region. There is also a visible priority to flexibility in approaches that increase the reach of CSF funding deeper into civil society across the region, although it is noted that only with the very localised grant schemes found in some EUDs does CSF funding begin to reach past civil society organisations to citizens themselves.

Flexibility is not so visible in the relevant EC finance departments, although this is potentially more significant at EUDs than for DG NEAR-funded Calls. It was noted during the field work that some tools available in the system are not actually allowed by all Finance Departments. The issue of rigidity within finance departments is exacerbated by delays in determinations.

There is a significant issue created by this rigidity, when coupled with the extended timeframe for consulting, preparing, issuing, assessing, awarding and contracting Calls for Proposals. In reality, a significant amount of time is likely to pass from initial consultations on the content and structure of a Call and the actual signing of contracts. The situation on the ground is quite likely to change, and in many instances significantly, during this extended period. That proposed Actions cannot be varied *at this point*, through an inception phase, or a similar type of approach, is both an inefficient use of EC grant funding and an ineffective approach to achieving the desired outcomes of the CSF.

A further area of concern is the actual process of submitting and reporting on proposals, with a range of concerns raised in field work about the heavy emphasis on manual processes related to Calls and grants. It is not clear why such a significant, large, geographically-distributed programme of the EC does not have its own electronic portal where all aspects of Calls, applications, notifications and then reporting would be done. As well as timeliness of processes, such an approach would benefit transparency, ease of use, coherence (across EUDs and DG NEAR) and aggregation of all aspects of CSF data. A further benefit of such an approach would be the inclusion of a communication function in the portal, where funded organisations would be able to directly and easily communicate with their Task Manager.

Effectiveness

9. To what extent is the financial assistance contributing to addressing the needs and priorities of the civil society sector? (Focus on civil society)

The CSF is effectively contributing to addressing the needs and priorities of civil society in the region, through the multi-beneficiary and regional projects it funds. There are a number of areas in this report that provide insight into different aspects of this discussion, including the relevance of the CSF to civil society and its agenda, the usefulness of the support in building CSO capacities, the impacts of the funding in terms of changes in regional societies. There is a range of cross-over between those discussions and discussions here with regards to effectiveness.

The single most important factor is how the support from the CSF contributes to building the capacity of the organisations that are being funded and the individuals working in these organisations. Capacity growth is noted in a wide range of areas:

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- Strategies and techniques for advocacy with local and national authorities.
- The use of CSO representatives as resources, based on their upgraded skills and knowledge.

Another important factor that indicates the effectiveness of CSF support is the practical contribution to policy and legislative change. This contribution includes:

- Empirical research that contributes to effective dialogue about the form and content of policies and legislation.
- Provision of focused training for authorities, including Courts, Police, Ombudsman Offices.
- Provision of training for the media.
- Social dialogue.
- Youth issues and advocacy.
- The development of tools for monitoring, in a wide range of areas. These tools, and this monitoring, provide objective data for analysis. There are a number of databases, monitoring tools and indices that have been created through CSF funding.

Finally, a clear example of the effectiveness of the CSF is the range of initiatives that have been developed for the provision of grant funding to smaller, more grassroots and local CSOs. There are a number of innovative and effective, nationally-based CSOs and foundations using CSF funds in creative ways to build CSO capacity and effectiveness. A number of these can be found in national CSFs, and there are also specific examples from the multi-beneficiary and regional programme:

- The TRAG Foundation's SIGN project.
- The Divac Foundation's Youth Bank Hubs.

There remains an issue with CSOs reaching out to citizens, to *civil society* more generally. The issue is generally understood, and the work with grassroots and local organisations addresses the issue to a certain extent, but it is an area needing more focus.

10. To what extent is the financial assistance contributing to achievement of CSF's stated strategic objectives and priorities? (Focus on the CSF itself)

The CSF is making a significant contribution to the achievement of its stated objectives and priorities:

- Continue promoting and enhancing accountability, credibility of civil society sector and improving the institutional and operational capacity of CSOs in relation with all stakeholders in the region and EU, from large public to decision makers.
 - Improvements in the capacity of CSOs is the area of most significant outcome for the CSF to date. Strategic thinking and management are notable areas of capacity growth, as are improvements in the systems, knowledge and skills of organisational management.
 - There is an improvement in the visibility of CSOs, notably those smaller, grassroots organisations benefiting from sub-grants.
 - There is a related improvement in the visibility of the issues being addressed by CSOs with CSF support.

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- Reinforce dialogue and strengthen ties between CSOs within the region and with their counterparts from the EU.
 - The regional and multi-beneficiary projects, including framework partnership agreements, operating grants, long-term action grants and technical assistance projects, all demonstrate a strong contribution to the engagement of CSOs and individuals across borders in the region and more widely. This engagement is seen as being important for effectiveness of outcomes (through learning processes) as well as in addressing historical issues between countries. The regional and EU-wide initiatives provide useful knowledge, data, skills and approaches both down from EU-based partners and up to those partners.
- Encourage sustainable CSOs partnership and networks, including public authorities.
 - While sustainability remains an issue, partnerships, coalitions and networks are receiving strong support from the CSF. This support has assisted with improvements in the knowledge and skills of partners, improvements in approaches (partner and network) and a strengthening of advocacy through better evidence bases and approaches.
 - There remains an issue with the relationships and partnerships with national authorities in particular across the region, although this is more attributable to the authorities themselves than to the projects funded by the CSF.
- Promoting transfer of knowledge and experience.
 - The regional and multi-beneficiary projects supported by the CSF demonstrate a strong commitment to growth in knowledge, skills and experience across the partnerships of funded networks, and are also demonstrating strong outcomes in this area.
 - The use of evidence-based approaches are particularly noted.
- Develop CSOs advocacy role in supporting democratic issues and advising citizens and public authorities.
 - As indicated above, the advocacy role of CSOs engaged in regional and multi-beneficiary projects is demonstrably stronger, based on effective approaches, improved knowledge and an increase in skills built through training programmes and engagement with regional and EU-based partners.
- Further encourage CSOs play increasing part in the adoption and implementation of the EU acquis in policy areas where they have an important implementation and advocacy role.
 - There is a very strong focus on approaches related to implementation of the EU acquis, and a developing advocacy capacity associated with these approaches.
 - There is a strong focus in relation to policy development, governance, rule of law, media and freedom of expression, a range of areas dealing with human rights and a specific focus on the building of capacity within CSOs.
- Raise citizen understanding of CSOs role and participation to the democratic process.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More work is required in terms of citizen understanding of the role of CSOs. This work is needed in effective visibility approaches, more focus on transparency and more specific engagement directly with citizens. This last is more apparent now in work done by grassroots and community-based organisations through sub-grants, but can be improved.
<p>11. To what extent are the different implementation instruments effective in providing support to civil society?</p> <p>As noted above, the approach of DG NEAR, and across the CSF generally, has been to build a mix of approaches and implementing instruments as a way of achieving a better reach, as well as improving the effectiveness of approaches taken by funded organisations. The multi-beneficiary and regional 'portfolio' of the CSF includes long-term action grants, operating grants, framework partnership agreements, Direct Grants to International Organisations and CSOs and technical assistance, so in the context of a mix of funding, this area of the CSF covers the full range of possibilities. It is not just that the full range is covered, but that there is a clear intention to find appropriate approaches to improve reach and effectiveness. Further, the thematic range of these grants is extensive. As well, there the grant schemes mentioned above that offer innovative and effective approaches to provision of assistance to CSOs of a variety of sizes, in a range of thematic areas and geographies. There is significant room for replication and further development of these approaches, and further innovation would be appropriate. All in all, the approach of the CSF is being effective in providing support to civil society, although there are a number of areas where approaches could be strengthened:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real dialogue and effectiveness of outcomes with government are not as strong as might be wished, although it is noted that this is more a reflection of national authorities and their own agendas than the work of the CSF and funded organisations. • Overemphasis on financial support to international agencies does not ensure the most effective outcomes for development of civil society organisations, including foundations, in the region. • Building monitoring and evaluation processes into grants would be an effective measure to improve learning and effectiveness.
<p>Impact</p> <p>12. What have been the impacts of the CSF to date?</p> <p>A range of impacts are visible, in multi-beneficiary and regional projects, from the funding provided by the CSF. While some impacts, or directions to impact are visible in the outcomes of specific initiatives, it is more important to point first to the change that is supported within organisations and across networks/ coalitions. Supported CSOs are better at what they do – they are learning in their own focused capacity-building exercises, in their network approaches and sharing and in regional programmes such as those provided by TACSO. New capacity is visible in advocacy techniques and approaches, in how to dialogue with and negotiate with government agencies and representatives, in how to build public presence and visibility. They are also better at their internal organisations processes, from strategic management to human resource management to financial management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TACSO needs specific mention, as it has been effective in national contexts within a regional framework, bringing together all relevant stakeholders and working carefully in building relevant organisational capacities. • Regional networks also require specific mention. Networking is discussed in more detail below, but from an impact perspective it is important to note the importance of these initiatives in addressing the huge discrepancy in the development of civil society across the region, and the role that exchange and

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sharing can play in civil society development, through peer-to-peer capacity-building. It is also worth noting the way that regional networking addresses, directly and indirectly, the historical divisions in the region.

- Organisational visibility is improving, and contributes to the potential for impact.
- Issue visibility is stronger (see below), and also contributes to the potential for impact.

At the level of specific funded initiatives, CSOs point to a number of impacts, or places where impact will potentially come as a result of the work they are doing with CSF funding. Some pertinent examples include:

- The ongoing development of legal frameworks for people with mental and psycho-social disabilities.
- Improvements in approaches that a) acknowledge elder abuse and b) address the issue socially and legally.
- Improvements in an understanding of the extent and impact of poverty on the aged, across the region.
- The creation of RYCO. There is a view that in its activities (particularly its grant-giving) that RYCO will have impact, but that its creation is already impact, given the processes of formation and the nature of its role.
- Initiatives focused on journalist safety and support, in the context of media independence and work against media 'clientelism'.
- Advocacy undertaken in BiH with the Courts that saw changes in the practice of institutionalisation of individuals with certain disabilities. A focus of this work was on bringing the Law in BiH into line with European frameworks.
- The sharing of effective mechanisms and processes from one country to others. There are many examples of where this sharing is undertaken by regional coalitions.
- A separate, but related approach is the use of regional competition to encourage change. This approach is noted by organisations working on policy and procedures with government institutions, who note that no country in the region likes being seen as being less effective in any given area of reform than any other country in the region.

13. Are regional networks funded through the CSF effectively advocating for policy reforms?

As is visible in a number of areas in this report, and the particular focus of evaluation enquiry in terms of multi-beneficiary and regional projects, the CSF focus on regional networking, networks and coalitions is a very important component of the work and focus of the CSF. There is a clear view that the Balkans is a region that needs to be developed regionally, due to its cultural frameworks and historical experiences. As much as the differences that are apparent across the region, so too are its similarities significant. Moreover, there is a notable desire in the countries of the region to not be outshone by their neighbours, which can be a motivating factor in reform processes.

There are two key reasons for support to regional networking:

- There is a discrepancy in the development of civil society in the region, and exchanges of knowledge, skills and experience, across CSOs in the region, is important for civil society development overall. Having the regional approach has seen the development of some really important regional discourses – this has been a real contribution of the CSF. This, and a related cross-fertilisation, has been one focus of the TACSO approach regionally.
- The divisions that exist in the countries of the region hamper all ongoing and general development. All development is hurt by historical divisions, as is seen in the recent rise of nationalism across the Western Balkans. Regional CSO networking directly and specifically addresses these issues, within civil society as well as more widely. It is a type of counter measure to the division. There is a need for high level, political cooperation, and it is working

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and viable to a certain extent, but what happens within the wider society is critical. Connections across borders add to stability, and CSOs set the tone for cooperation, addressing divisions, and contributing to the underlying value of good neighbour relations.

Advocating for policy reforms is a very important criteria for discussion, given the role being played by funded regional networks within the CSF. This role is discussed in detail above, at Relevance and Effectiveness. Some key aspects are noted here:

- Regional initiatives focused on anti-corruption.
- A regional strategy focused on improvements in public procurement.
- Regional approaches to development of a quality and independent media, shielded from outside political interference; a regional tool focused on the media in the areas of integrity and transparency; a regional initiative addressing a media Code of Ethics, Principles and Self-regulation.
- A regional initiative in the field of disability, focused on ensuring a civil society that is actively participating in public debate on democracy, human rights, social inclusion and the rule of law, and working to influence policy and decision-making processes.
- A regional initiative focused on conducting research that can be used by stakeholders – evidence-based support to civil society to assist in drafting public policies and in advocating for reform.
- An initiative focused on civil society indicators for PAR, which is done in cooperation with PAR line ministries in all Western Balkan's countries.
- A network in the field of the aging, including data collection, fact collection, network learning and cross-fertilisation of actions through partnerships.
- TACSO Technical Assistance, and the People to People initiative managed by TACSO, as tools for developing institutional capacity and contribute to the development of technical, organisational and thematic knowledge and skills.
- A regional rural development network with strong links to national authorities in rural development, including strong initiatives in policy development, and dialogue/ cooperation with decision-makers. This initiative has strong, developing links with existing European networks in rural development, and has benefited from People to People, via the CSF, as well as the use of LEADER and LEADER+ in the development of LAGs. These are noted as they are indicative of the capacity of networks to tap into technical and financial resources, as well as other relevant networks, to improve activities and results.
- Regional initiatives are critical in developing effective approaches to reconciliation, as the national level cannot ever secure the whole picture of the past. One regional initiative is focused on establishing a complete picture of the past, which can only ever be seen in a complete way when it is 'seen as joint, as shared'. This focus, in the context of transitional justice, exemplifies the importance and the effectiveness of CSF funding.
- A separate, but related project dealing with youth and reconciliation addresses similar issues, including activities in Croatia because Croatia is seen as fundamental to these reconciliation processes, irrespective of whether or not it is a Member State.
- A regional initiative focused on youth, advocacy for youth participation and the role and place of youth and accession agendas and reporting. A key intention of this initiative, among others, is to ensure that the needs and priorities of youth are areas of accountability for Government and the EC. The granting programme of this initiative is specifically focused on grantees being 'good examples – we want to use them to promote good practice.'

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On the practical side, there is one critical reason for ongoing support to regional initiatives – they are unlikely to ever receive national funding, so will have a great difficulty in succeeding without CSF assistance. There are ways in which national initiatives can build local financial support, some aspects of which are discussed in the Sustainability section of this report, but these approaches can only ever be partly successful for regional networks. Yes, national partners of regional networks can, in principle, find local resourcing, but funding specifically directed to the network is a much more difficult proposition.

14. What factors are there, which contribute to or hamper impact?

There are a number of factors that inhibit impact, and potential for impact from the CSF's funded initiatives.

- One key to effective democracy that is not visible enough currently is the building of effective dialogue by CSOs up to authorities and down to citizens/civil society more generally. This process of dialogue is as important as the activities of CSOs, and is missing to a certain extent, which has a negative effect on potential for impact.
- A range of external factors also hamper impact from CSF-funded initiatives.
 - Political instability in the region. The priorities of governments are heavily focused on survival, and actions related to power, more than governance.
 - Lack of commitment on the part of governments to an enabling environment. (Discussed in more detail elsewhere.)
 - The level of distrust between government and CSOs, such that cooperation requires significant enhancement. This lack of trust has flowed on to society in general, and there remains a significant 'image problem' for non-governmental organisations across the Western Balkans and Turkey.
 - There is a linked, and prevalent, developing "clientelism" in government processes that impacts on the view the wider society has of CSOs and detracts from civil society effectiveness.
 - A relative lack of capacity in government agencies relevant to a range of CSF-funded projects. There is some attribution of the lack of public consultation on legislation to this lack of capacity, i.e., that this failure is related to knowledge and skills, not a wish to avoid consultation.
- Grant timeframes. While the lengthening of timeframes is noted and supported, legislative and policy change, effective development of regional coalitions, the effective engagement of established and/ or supported regional networks in advocacy on national and regional issues and priorities, and the development of an effective dialogue process and relationship with government authorities is a long-term process. A lack of surety of funding, or of the potential to apply for funding, hampers impact, and greater emphasis is needed in ensuring the sequencing of Calls, so that funded organisations are in a position to apply for follow-up funding in those cases where a greater level of impact can be achieved through further work or where there a clear, new directions opening up that can be of importance to the organisation, the network or the region in general. There is a second, important aspect of sequencing – the potential for increases to the size of grants an organisation receives as they develop their knowledge, skills and experience.

Sustainability

15. To what extent are the impacts noted to date sustainable and likely to continue producing effects after the end of CSF assistance?

There are a number of areas in the CSF's support to regional and multi-beneficiary initiatives where the possibility of sustainability of actions and sustainability of results has improved, directly as a result of CSF assistance. These areas are most notable on the organisation side, as opposed to external change, although

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external change is noted. It is discussed above, in the section on impact. The most important sustainability aspects for organisations are visible in their own processes. Particular mention is made of the improvements funded organisations have seen in their ability to think strategically, to plan strategically and to act strategically. This change has occurred as a result of training they have received, such as that provided through TACSO, and more directly in their ongoing interactions with and learning from their more experienced coalition partners. Indeed, much change in practice has come specifically from what has been learned through sharing processes in their networks.

Organisations also point to improvements in management capacity, in administrative, human resource and financial knowledge and skills. It is worth noting here that the administrative and financial requirements of the CSF were raised by funded organisations extensively during the evaluation's field work. There is a consistency of views that these requirements are extensive, complex and time-consuming, and require specific and significant growth in skills and in systems for organisations – specifically those who are new to CSF grants. What is not so consistent is the view of organisations about these requirements – while many organisations think requirements should be less complex and less demanding, there is significant support for maintaining this complexity – organisations point to how they have benefited overall, in terms of their professionalism, for having to raise their own administrative capacities in order to fulfil CSF project requirements.

There is an increase in organisational visibility due to their participation in CSF-funded projects. While this is noted strongly with smaller, grassroots organisations that have received a sub-grant for local activities, it is also noted at the regional level from organisations engaging with regional partners in activities that are at a higher level of advocacy and civic engagement. Related to this increase in organisational visibility is an increase in visibility of the issues of importance to organisations funded through the CSF.

The Sign for Sustainability project (SIGN) – funded as a Framework Partnership Agreement – requires a specific mention. SIGN was specifically developed to increase the sustainability and impact of civil society in giving citizens a voice and in influencing public sector reform processes. The SIGN approach was on philanthropy development, corporate social responsibility and mobilisation of local and national resources. SIGN developed a specific methodology for ensuring that CSOs can survive on local resources, and has demonstrated that this is possible. The SIGN methodology is effective, and eminently replicable.

There are other, specific examples of approaches taken within partnerships/ networks that are specifically aimed at improving the sustainability of the network, and network partner organisations. As well as the specific skills of partner organisations, these approaches also include joint network funding strategies. As indicated above, sustainability is about management as well as about funding.

The lengthening of grant timeframes has had a positive impact on potential for sustainability. The impact of a 2 plus 2 approach, or a 3 plus 3 approach, is relevant to a number of areas of the evaluation, and the positive benefits of increasing timeframes is visible in a number of areas. While these longer timeframes have been an important contributor to results and sustainability, but they are not the only key to the future. Organisations must also improve the diversity of their funding sources. Notable in the SIGN project is a focus on skilling-up of organisations for this diversification – this is not a process or skill that just happens in organisations. Fundraising is a skill, a whole set of skills, and greater emphasis is needed on improving this skill set in CSOs across the region.

Cross-cutting Issues (gender and human rights)

16. Is there a sufficient and effective focus in CSF funding on human rights and gender equality?

There is a clear and acknowledged focus in the CSF's frameworks on human rights, and particularly on gender equality and gender mainstreaming. The focus of the EC, and also the CSF, for funded organisations to take gender into account is clear and visible. Wider thematic areas in terms of human rights are not so visible in documents and priority frameworks. While human rights per se are notable, there is only limited mention specifically of the LGBTI community, the

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<p>disabled, the aged, youth or any of a wide range of marginalised groups in the community. This is not to say that these groups are not visible in grant – they are – but not generally in terms of focus.</p> <p>Further, there is a sense that the expressed focus on human rights, and gender equality in particular, is not so clearly a focus of funded organisations or of funded initiatives. Specifically, there is a concern that the organisational focus in grant applications is formulaic, as opposed to real; that organisations know they need to say something about ‘gender’, as opposed to exhibiting a real commitment to bringing a real focus on human rights and gender mainstreaming into their programme designs and implementation.</p> <p>Some consideration is needed as to the focus on human rights and gender and coherence with the EIDHR. There is a clear complementarity with EIDHR in this area, and also a potential for overlap here with the aims and priorities of the EIDHR. In this context the focus on human rights and gender as cross-cutting issues is noted.</p> <p>What is not well understood within funded organisations is that the intent of cross-cutting themes is that they are given consideration across all aspects of all initiatives. The intent is not to ensure that sufficient numbers of projects are funded that address human rights and gender equality, but that in every funded initiative a genuine consideration is given in design and implementation to ensuring all human rights are considered and respected.</p>
Environment
<p>17. Is there a sufficient and effective focus in CSF guidelines on the environment?</p> <p>There is a clear and acknowledged focus in the CSF’s frameworks on the environment. The focus of the EC, and the CSF, for funded organisations to take the environment into account is clear and visible, and there are a range of funded initiatives, particularly through EUDs that address the environment.</p>
Coherence, Coordination and Consistency
<p>18. To what extent are the different national and regional actions of the CSF programme coherent/ complementing/ overlapping?</p> <p>As noted above, at the structural level there is a well-founded and well-implemented coordination process in relation to the CSF.</p> <p>There is a clear complementarity in the work of the CSF with EIDHR, although areas of potential overlap are noted. In its ‘support to democratic processes’, the EIDHR has a specific focus on ‘<i>cooperation between civil society and local authorities and relevant state institutions</i>’, which, while complementary to the CSF, can be seen also as clearly overlapping with the CSF’s objectives with public authorities, and advocacy in support of democratic issues and participation in the democratic process. The CSF focus on social inclusion, anti-discrimination and gender complement EIDHR priorities, but also can be seen as overlapping with the EIDHR’s strong emphasis on vulnerable groups.</p> <p>There are however visible, and not unimportant issues related to coherence to be addressed across/ within the CSF. These issues are visible in a number of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of consistency between EUDs and between EUDs and DG NEAR in the frameworks of Calls. While not strictly speaking a ‘problem’, this lack of consistency is indicative of a lack of coherent direction. • EUDs do not know enough about MBs, generally and in their country. There is a related lack of correlation in the responses provided by EUDs and DG NEAR to questions from funded organisations. • There is not enough learning across EUDs and up to DG NEAR, particularly in relation to successful approaches and strategies.

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<p>19. To what extent do supported projects ensure fulfilment of the visibility strategy set by the European Commission?</p> <p>Obligations of funded organisations in relation to fulfilment of the visibility strategy are completely clear and understood, and implemented to a very high level. This side of the question of visibility is very strong, both in understanding of obligations and in completion with these obligations.</p> <p>On the other side, this does not mean that meeting the requirements of the visibility strategy necessarily gives the desired results. There are two areas of weakness, one that is relevant to funded organisations and one that is relevant to the EU:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While being in receipt of EU funds can be important to organisations in terms of respect, in the current climate of distrust, this visibility can also create issues for organisations as a key criticism of CSOs in the region is that they are acting as agents of external powers. • More relevant to the EU, and expressed more generally in the evaluation's field processes, is the view that the fulfilment of visibility requirements does not mean that the project, nor EU funding support more generally, nor the importance of EU support to national strategies are necessarily being heard or understood by the wider community in any of the beneficiary countries. There is evidence to suggest that the assistance of the EU to national reform processes is not well understood and that there remains a lacking of relevant information in the community.
Added Value
<p>20. What value is added to work and initiatives compared to that which might be achieved without the contributions of the CSF?</p> <p>A range of areas of added value are visible through the regional initiatives funded by the CSF. Many are discussed above, and are summarised here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration and competition as a way of building effective partnership across borders. As well as being effective in the context of a given project, this approach deals indirectly with the divisions from the past. • There has been a real growth in expertise – individual experts – across the region, through their engagement in expert roles in a variety of projects. • Political influences are enhanced by regional networks, particularly where national partners use the developments and innovations of their partners in their advocacy work with national authorities. • There are a number of examples of empirical research from CSF-funded initiatives contributing directly to advocacy work on policy and legislative frameworks with national authorities. • The growth in capacity in CSOs is most noted in their strategic capacities – thinking and planning. This was not necessarily a focus of initiatives, but was the area that grew most noticeably. • Mapping activities by CSOs nationally/ regionally. • Database activities by CSOs nationally/ regionally – developing knowledge, systems, capacities in this area, in ways that contribute to evidence-based advocacy.

7.10.6 Lessons Learned

Lessons related to programming efficiency that improves prospects of meeting objectives.

- It is important to ensure that organisations stay within their area of expertise and build their capacity in that area.
- Involving partners in the definition of objectives from the beginning including when negotiating the project has proven helpful.
- Realistic objectives create stronger local ownership of the project.
- Building project activities on the conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned from a previous project increases programming efficiency.
- Keys to sustainability include
 - A more strategic and longer-term perspective from EUDs/ DG NEAR.
 - Better coherence within EUDs/ DG NEAR.
 - Longer funding timeframes.
 - Variety – diversification of sources; local fundraising; public-private funding.
 - The first step of government assistance should be co-financing.
- Focus on supporting the best projects, and on trying to maintain momentum.

Lessons related to strengthening the link between the needs and priorities of the civil society sector and CSF.

- It is necessary for debate and dialogue about the past to be very seriously organised, and always with a chance for governments to have a say.

Lessons related to strengthening the active involvement of civil society in policy and related activities.

- When it comes to assistance to media in EU candidate countries, the EU has consulted the civil society broadly through regular regional conferences (Speak Up) which have proven very helpful to define assistance priorities in that field, and this should continue. For regional programs, the involvement of the civil society helps defining a project with a tailored approach between countries.
- It is possible to network without funds, or prior to funding. One specific network recognised the need, and when they saw the need they saw to that it was not all about funds so they began networking anyway. They enjoyed their networking and they try to link this into the project, but the project is not the only aspect.
- Networks that existed before funding have a greater possibility of sustainability.

Lessons related to improvements in/ impact on EU reform related legislation and its implementation (making effective fulfilment of EU accession criteria).

- In the field of improving freedom of expression, the EU accession criteria have shown that it can help improve legal protections for media professionals. However, improving legislation is not enough - what needs to be improved is the effective implementation of the laws, and in the case of the Western Balkans and Turkey, in spite of EU accession negotiations, the media freedom situation is not improving.

7.10.7 Conclusions

Relevance

There is a clear relevance to CSF objectives, in the context of the EC Enlargement Strategy, the objectives and priorities of the country strategy and policy documents and programmes, and to the content, analysis and priorities of Country Reports. CSF Objectives are generally clear and realistic, and Priorities are

well aligned with the needs of civil society in the country – capacity building, dialogue with authorities and empowerment. There are a number of systems and processes in place that a) ensure links between the objectives of the EU's support to civil society and civil society itself, and there is a significant correlation between the objectives of EU support and the activities and results of funded projects. There are a range of mechanisms that are used in CSF design and implementation that are focused on ensuring effective linkages between CSF priorities and funding and those of other key donors. Further elaboration of objectives, to render them measurable, including introduction of SMART indicators, would add value to CSF monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

Efficiency

There is a clear focus on, and delivery of a wider range of instruments to ensure a greater reach into civil society with CSF funding. The multi-beneficiary and regional 'portfolio' of the CSF includes long-term action grants, operating grants, framework partnership agreements, Direct Grants to International Organisations and CSOs and technical assistance, so in the context of a mix of funding, this area of the CSF covers the full range of possibilities. It is not just that the full range is covered, but that there is a clear intention to find appropriate approaches to improve reach and effectiveness. The CSF is developing and implementing innovative approaches, although there are organisational/administrative constraints, as limited staffing constrains possibilities in terms of the numbers (and sizes) of awarded grants. The availability of action grants, framework partnership agreements and operating grants all offer options for funding that can be of benefit to a variety of organisations. Flexibility is not so visible in the relevant EC finance departments, although this is potentially more significant at EUDs than for DG NEAR-funded Calls. It was noted during the field work that some tools available in the system are not actually allowed by all Finance Departments. The dependence on paper-based systems, and/ or electronic systems that have not been developed in an integrated fashion, specifically for the CSF, constrains CSF efficiency and impacts negatively on funded organisations. The CSF would benefit from a close look into the development of an electronic portal for all administrative, financial and reporting components of the facility. CSF processes of Call, assessment, award and contracting are lengthy, and as such there can be a disconnect between project design and the real situation on the ground at the time of award. The absence of an inception period, and allowance for project re-design, particularly for larger or longer projects, detracts from CSF efficiency and project/ CSF effectiveness. There are a number of grant schemes operated by CSOs or foundations in the region, with CSF funding, that offer innovative and effective approaches to provision of assistance to CSOs of a variety of sizes, in a range of thematic areas and geographies. There is significant room for replication and further development of these approaches, and further innovation in this area would also be appropriate.

Effectiveness

The CSF is effectively contributing to addressing the needs and priorities of civil society in the region. The single most important factor is how the support from the CSF contributes to building the capacity of the organisations that are being funded and the individuals working in these organisations. Capacity growth is particularly apparent in strategies and techniques for advocacy with local and national authorities and the upgraded skills and knowledge of CSO representatives. Critical aspects of this include a focus on evidence-based advocacy, using empirical research in dialogue with authorities on policy and legislation, focused training with authorities (Courts, Police, Ombudsman's Offices) and media. Another area of effectiveness that is visible is the range of innovative initiatives for the provision of grant funding to smaller, community-based and grassroots organisations.

The CSF is making a significant contribution to the achievement of its stated objectives and priorities. It is:

- Promoting and enhancing accountability, credibility of the civil society sector and improving the institutional and operational capacity of CSOs in relation with all stakeholders in the region and EU, from large public to decision makers.
- Reinforcing dialogue and strengthening ties between CSOs within the region and with their counterparts from the EU.
- Encouraging sustainable CSO partnership and networks, including with public authorities.

- Promoting transfer of knowledge and experience.
- Developing the CSO advocacy role in supporting democratic issues and advising citizens and public authorities.
- Encouraging CSOs to play an increasing part in the adoption and implementation of the EU acquis in policy areas where they have an implementation and advocacy role.
- Raise citizen understanding of CSOs role and participation to the democratic process.

Building monitoring and evaluation processes into grants would be an effective measure to improve learning and effectiveness.

Impact

A range of impacts are visible from the funding provided by the CSF. While some impacts, or directions to impact, are visible in the outcomes of specific initiatives, it is more important to point first to the change that is supported within organisations and across networks/ coalitions. Supported CSOs are better at what they do – they are learning in their own focused capacity-building exercises, in their network approaches and sharing and in regional programmes such as those provided by TACSO. New capacity is visible in advocacy techniques and approaches, in how to dialogue with and negotiate with government agencies and representatives, in how to build public presence and visibility. They are also better at their internal organisations processes, from strategic management to human resource management to financial management. The CSF focus on regional networking, networks and coalitions is a very important component of the work and focus of the CSF. The Balkans is a region that needs to be developed regionally, due to its cultural frameworks and historical experiences. There is a discrepancy in the development of civil society in the region - exchanges of knowledge, skills and experience, across CSOs in the region, is important for civil society development overall. Having the regional approach has seen the development of some really important regional discourses – this has been a real contribution of the CSF. This, and a related cross-fertilisation, has been one focus of the TACSO approach regionally. The divisions that exist in the countries of the region hamper all ongoing and general development. Regional CSO networking, directly and specifically, addresses these issues, within civil society as well as more widely. It is a type of countermeasure to the division. Connections across borders add to stability, and CSOs set the tone for cooperation, addressing divisions, and contributing to the underlying value of good neighbour relations. One key to effective democracy that is not visible enough currently is the building of effective dialogue by CSOs up to authorities and down to citizens/ civil society more generally. This process of dialogue is as important as the activities of CSOs, and is missing to a certain extent, which has a negative effect on potential for impact. External factors, including political instability, a lack of commitment in governments across the region to implementation of the enabling environment and a level of distrust between government and CSOs, are all contributing factors that inhibit impact from CSF funding.

Sustainability

There are a number of areas in CSF support where the possibility of sustainability of actions and sustainability of results has improved. This is most notable on the organisation side, as opposed to external change. Funded organisations have improved their ability to think strategically, to plan strategically and to act strategically, as a result of training received and through peer-to-peer learning. There are also visible improvements in management capacity - administrative, human resource and financial knowledge and skills. There is an increase in organisational visibility due to their participation in CSF-funded projects, and in the visibility of the issues of importance to organisations funded through the CSF. There are a number of innovative approaches to partnership and to grant-giving that are contributing to organisation and network sustainability, and particularly to sustainability of funding – these innovative approaches are replicable across the CSF, by EUDs and DG NEAR. The lengthening of grant timeframes is contributing to sustainability, as organisations are better able to plan and implement, and in this way to build their own, more sustainable approaches.

Cross-cutting areas

There is a clear and acknowledged focus in the CSF's frameworks on human rights, and particularly on gender equality and gender mainstreaming. The focus of the EC, and also the CSF, for funded organisations to take gender into account is also clear and visible. There is evidence that this focus is not so clearly a key component of funded initiatives, and in particular that there is more a formal, rather than substantive commitment to human rights and gender mainstreaming in project design and implementation. Funded organisations would benefit from an improved understanding of (and ability to act on) the intent of cross-cutting themes – i.e., that they are given consideration across all aspects of all initiatives; that in every funded initiative a genuine consideration is given in design and implementation to ensuring all human rights are considered and respected..

Coherence

There is a complementarity in the work of the CSF with EIDHR, although there are areas of potential overlap. In its 'support to democratic processes', the EIDHR has a specific focus on '*cooperation between civil society and local authorities and relevant state institutions*', which, while complementary to the CSF, can be seen also as clearly overlapping with the CSF's objectives with public authorities, and advocacy in support of democratic issues and participation in the democratic process. The CSF focus on social inclusion, anti-discrimination and gender complement EIDHR priorities, but also can be seen as overlapping with the EIDHR's strong emphasis on vulnerable groups. There are some issues of coherence to be addressed across/ within the CSF, including the need for greater sharing of successful innovations and approaches and a greater focus on shared learning, between EUDs and with DG NEAR.

Visibility

Obligations of funded organisations in relation to fulfilment of the visibility strategy are completely clear and understood, and implemented to a very high level. However, meeting the requirements of the visibility strategy does not necessarily give the desired results. While being in receipt of EU funds can be important to organisations in terms of respect, in the current climate of distrust, this visibility can also create issues for organisations as a key criticism of CSOs in the region is that they are acting as agents of external powers. From the perspective of the EU, the fulfilment of visibility requirements does not necessarily mean that EU funding support, nor the importance of EU support to national strategies, are being heard or understood by the wider community. There is evidence to suggest that the assistance of the EU to national reform processes is not well understood and that there remains a lack of relevant information in the community.

7.10.8 Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- DG NEAR work with EUDs to develop an improved approach to shared learning, within the administrative components of management of the CSF, to improve the coherence of CSF approaches. The key components of this shared learning and the formal sharing of effective approaches being undertaken with funding instruments, such as the successful grant schemes visible in a number of EUDs and DG NEAR.

- DG NEAR do detailed research into the development of an electronic portal for all administrative, financial and reporting components of the facility. Development of this portal would be closely linked with the development work of a CSF database, which is analysed, with recommendations, in Chapter 8 of the Evaluation Report. Key components of the portal would be:
 - Issuance of Calls for proposals.
 - Updates to Calls.
 - Submission of applications.
 - Inputs to and maintenance of organisation contact details.
 - Award of contracts.
 - Financial reporting.
 - Narrative reporting.
 - Results-based reporting.
 - Potential for online discussions with task manager.
- DG NEAR initiate an 'inception phase', wherein changes would be possible for certain aspects of a project's design, to address changes in the external situation, partner status or changes in knowledge and skills, would assist organisations to better focus their actual activities and would improve outcomes across all levels.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the CSF should be improved through:
 - Introduction of (SMART) indicators at all levels of results.
 - Introduction of a mandatory evaluation of some projects, based on size and duration. While the criteria for size and duration should be determined by CSF management, any project with a length of greater than three years should be evaluated.
- DG NEAR develop requirements and frameworks for the inclusion of human rights and gender as cross-cutting themes, including a focus on assisting and ensuring that CSOs understand the *intent* of cross-cutting themes and approaches, as well as the *value* to them and their initiatives of such an approach.
- DG NEAR facilitate the visibility of the CSF support by introducing requirements for a clear visibility plan for the CSF supported actions.

7.11 Annex/ Appendix 11 - List of key informants

Note: The final version of the evaluation report contains a full list of key informants. For reasons of privacy, this full list of informants has been removed from this published version of the report.

7.12 Annex/ Appendix 12 - List of documents reviewed

7.12.1 EU strategy & programming

Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA I and II) 2011-2016.

Commission Communication COM(2012) 492 final: 'The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations', Brussels 12/09/2012

European Commission Enlargement Strategies (2011-2015).

- EU Enlargement Strategy November 2015
- Albania 2016 Report
- Turkey 2016 Report
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2016 Report
- Serbia 2016 Report
- Montenegro 2016 Report
- Kosovo 2016 Report
- Bosnia and Herzegovina 2016 report

Multi-Country Indicative Strategy Document (2014-2020).

Guidelines for EU support to Civil Society in enlargement countries 2014-2020. DG Enlargement.

Guidelines for EU support to media freedom and media integrity in enlargement countries, 2014-2020. DG Enlargement.

Financing Decisions of the Civil Society Facility Programmes and Civil Society Facility - Regional and National Action Documents for the years 2011-2013, 2014-2015 and 2016-2017

- Decision 2011/22-965 and 2012/23-324 (allocations for 2011 and 2012)
- Decision 2013/024-081 (allocations for 2013)
- Commission Implementing Decision of 11.12.2014 adopting a Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for the years 2014-2015 under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPAI)
- Commission Implementing Decision of 20.7.2016 adopting a Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for the years 2016-2017 under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPAI)

Project Fiche – IPA Programme Civil Society Facility – Horizontal Activities (Technical Assistance, People 2 People Programme, Partnership Actions) – CRIS Number 2008/020-025.

June 2016. Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy.

Civil Society Facility projects Database

2012. Thematic Evaluation of EU's Support to Civil Society in the Western Balkans (namely, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo under UNSCR 1244, Montenegro and Serbia) and Turkey 2012. EC/Europa.

August 2014. Final Report - Mid-term Review of Partnership Programmes for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). Particip.

January 2017. Draft Report. Evaluation of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II). Particip.

April 2016. Inception Report - Thematic Evaluation on Support to Economic Governance in Enlargement and Neighbourhood Countries.

September 2016. Inception Report. Evaluation of EU support to social protection in external action.

April 2017. Desk Report Volume 1. Evaluation of EU support to social protection in external action.

7.12.2 Interventions

7.12.2.1 Albania

Contract 330583 - Bolstering the Role of Courts in Sustaining Freedom of Expression in Albania'

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 331531 - Sustainable Multi-purpose Centre in Tirana Municipality Unit no.7

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 353791 - 'Achieve – Albanian Civil Society for a European Environment

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 370476 - CIVILISC - Civil Society Instruments against Corruption

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

7.12.2.2 BiH

Contract 310583 - Monitoring of implementation of youth policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 310808 - Voice of Children

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 310826 - Environment Friendly Energy Coalition Team

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 368538 - BASE - Building Accountability and Systems in the Elections

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 370829 - Integrity through Justice: Independent civil society monitoring and assessment of judicial response to corruption

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

7.12.2.3 Kosovo

Contract 371879 - Sub-granting scheme for grass-root CSOs advocacy initiatives in Kosovo

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 372147 - Kosovo education for employment network (KEEN)

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

7.12.2.4 The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Contract 333686 - CSOs Watchdog Network to Prevent Spoils and Conflict of Interest in the Public Administration

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 333780 - Network 23

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 338806 - Youth Entrepreneurship Support Network

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 370681 - ReForMedia - Citizens, CSOs and Institutional Reforming Media in Macedonia

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 370964 - IPA 2 Mechanism for Civil Society Organisations

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 338852 - Coalition for Budget Monitoring

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 371474 - Roma CSO Network - Roma Community's Response

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 371838 - Stronger CSOs for participatory transposition and implementation of the EU 2020 climate and Energy Package

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 369849 - Diversity is trendy - promoting local multiculturalism!

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

7.12.2.5 Montenegro

Contract 306400 - Open Mind – Organisation of the Participation in Enlarged Networks: Montenegro is Inclusive, Not Discriminatory

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 306435 - Local coalitions for community development

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 345136 - De facto strong

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 345161 - Speed up ! Enhance the role of CSO in Montenegrin social policies development and implementation

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 346860 - Judicial Reform Monitoring

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 371015 - Social Entrepreneurship: A Step towards Independence

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 374391 - Health Up - Contribution of civil society to strengthening partnership dialogue and cooperation between non-governmental and governmental sector in the health system

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

7.12.2.6 Serbia

Contract 307263 - Local Networking for Sustainable Development

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 307357 - Women in Progress – Capacity building at the local level for gender economic mainstreaming in Serbia

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 307367 - Illustrated Glossary of Corruption

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 307557 - Stop Corruption that Threatens Decent Work

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 333319 - Equal in Social Service Providing

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 333329 - ReForce – Reinforcing the Role of Civil Society Organisations in Community Development and Public Administration Reform

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 333334 - The Context Studies: The Diversity of the Diversity

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 333238 - We plan strategically – and contribute to an accelerated development of local community

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 333303 - Networking for Community Child-Oriented model

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 353621 - Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 372030 - Access to my rights (through Ombudman cases)

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 372167 - local watchdogs

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 383180 - Providing Effective Support To The Members Of The Most Discriminated Groups And Their Organizations

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 383186 - "Public Money for Public Interest" - supporting civil society initiative for public interest

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 371964 - Ordinary people: Missing rights - finding solutions

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

7.12.2.7 Turkey

Contract 352923 - Turkey's Prison Information Network (TPIN)

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 332438 - Diversity and Litigation Platform Turkey

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

7.12.2.8 Multi-beneficiary and regional

Contract 305617 - Media Accountability in South East Europe

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 306161 - Towards Efficient Public Procurement Mechanisms in the EU (potential) Candidate Countries

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 306172 – SIGN for Sustainability

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 306530 - Improving the provision of Social Service Delivery in South Eastern Europe through the empowerment of national and regional CSO networks

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 332758 - Civic Response to Clientelism in Media -MEDIA CIRCLE

- Grant Application and related annexes

- Reporting documentation

Contract 369846 - Western Balkan's Regional Platform for Advocating Media Freedom and journalists' safety

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 370038 - WeBER - Western Balkans Enabling Project for Civil Society Monitoring of Public Administration Reform

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 370114 - SE Europe Transnational CSO Coalition for Women and Child Protection Against Human Trafficking and Gender-based Violence - STOP

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 370287 - Taking action on social inclusion of older people

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 370394 - Youth Banks Hubs or Western Balkans and Turkey

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 364189 - Strengthening the RECOM Process (Phase II)

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 370628 - ARYSE (At-Risk Youth Social Empowerment

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 371198 - Civil Society acts for environmentally sound socio-economic development

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 370300 - Joint initiative to Empower Roma Civil Society on the Western Balkans and Tukey

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 370371 - ALTER - Active Local Territories for Economic Development of Rural Areas

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 306649 - PERSON (Partnership to Ensure Reform of Support in other Nations)

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 307460 - South East Europe Sustainable Energy Policy or SEE SEP

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

- Contract 307476 - Civil Society for Good Governance and Anti-Corruption in Southeast Europe: Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Capacity Building for Monitoring, Advocacy and Awareness Raising

- Grant Application and related annexes

- Reporting documentation

Contract 351845 - Regional Youth Exchange Association

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 351847 - European Integration and the social dimension: strengthening regional cooperation of trade unions in the Balkans

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 351850 - Western Balkans Pulse for Police Integrity and Trust (POINT)

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 351960 - Towards a Western Balkans and Turkey LGBTI Human Rights Regional Association

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 373876 - Work Programme - Reconciliation between communities

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 293657 - Reinforcement of Local Democracy

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 307594 - Technical Assistance to the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society (Serbia)

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 307716 - Capacity building of government institutions to engage in a policy dialogue with civil society

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 325596 - Technical Assistance to the Civil Society Organisations (TACSO 2) from the IPA beneficiaries (1/2) + P2P

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 370752 - Civil Society Facility (Sivil Düşün II)

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 373104 - Technical cooperation for the development of institutional mechanisms for the cooperation between the government and non governmental organisations in Montenegro

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

Contract 372768 - Improving Governance - Empowering Civil Society - Lot 2: Support to the implementation of the Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society

- Grant Application and related annexes
- Reporting documentation

7.12.3 Other/ Context

December 2016. Terms of Reference – Centre of Thematic Expertise – Civil Society Support. Version 15.

Undated. Biljana Spasovska. The Effectiveness Of EU's Regional Support For CSO Partnerships For Fostering Democratic Reforms And Rule Of Law In Enlargement Countries. Balkan Civil Society Development Network.

August 2014. Mid-term Review of Partnership Programmes for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

August 2016. Mapping Study of Civil Society Organisations in BiH. EPRD Policy & Development.

Calendar of P2P Events and Activities

7.12.4 Web-links

Multi-country – financial assistance under IPA II: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/instruments/multi-beneficiary-programme_en

TACSO Baseline and Monitoring Reports

- 2013
- 2014
- 2015

TACSO Needs Assessment Reports

Public Award Notices for CSF Calls

June 2016. Morana Smodlaka Krajnovic. Report on Regional CSO Networks in Western Balkans, Turkey: http://www.tacso.org/doc/report_regional_cso_networks_2016.pdf. TACSO Regional Office.

Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA I and II) 2011-2016. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/instruments/multi-beneficiary-programme/index_en.htm

Commission Communication COM(2012) 492 final : 'The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations', Brussels 12/09/2012: Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0492:FIN:EN:PDF>

European Commission Enlargement Strategies (2011-2015). Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/package/index_en.htm

Multi-Country Indicative Strategy Document (2014-2020). Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2014/20140919-multi-country-strategy-paper.pdf

Financing Decisions of the Civil Society Facility Programmes and Civil Society Facility Regional and National Action Documents for the years 2011-2013, 2014-2015 and 2016-2017. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/instruments/multi-beneficiary-programme/index_en.htm (see bottom of the page under different years):

- Decision 2011/22-965 and 2012/23-324 (allocations for 2011 and 2012)
- Decision 2013/024-081 (allocations for 2013)
- Decision 2014/031-605 and 2015/037-653 (allocations for 2014 and 2015)
- Decision 2016/038-960 (allocations for 2016) and CSF and Media Programme 2017 not yet approved and available upon request at DG NEAR D5.

Guidelines for EU support to Civil Society in enlargement countries 2014-2020: Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/civil_society/doc_guidelines_cs_support.pdf

Civil Society Facility projects Database (Western Balkans and Turkey) (2011-2015). Available upon request

TACSO Baseline and Monitoring reports for 2013, 2014 and 2015. Available at: http://www.tacso.org/documents/otherdoc/?id=9887&template_id=73&langTag=en-US

Thematic Evaluation of EU's Support to Civil Society in the Western Balkans (namely, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo under UNSCR 1244, Montenegro and Serbia) and Turkey 2012. http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/financial_assistance/phare/evaluation/2012_eval_cs_final_report_2.pdf

Mid-term Review of Partnership Programmes for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). August 2014. Available upon request at DG NEAR Unit D5

Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations (TACSO) needs assessment reports. Available at: http://www.tacso.org/documents/reports/Archive.aspx?langTag=en-US&template_id=73&pageIndex=3

7.13 Annex/ Appendix 13 - Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Questions (EQ)	Judgement Criteria (JC)	Judgement Indicators	Sources of Information
Relevance			
Programming Level			
1. To what extent are the defined objectives of the CSF relevant?	<p>Consistency of CSF objectives and priorities with EC Enlargement Strategy.</p> <p>Consistency of CSF objectives and priorities to EC country reports and related strategy, policy and programme documents.</p> <p>Alignment of CSF objectives with the Copenhagen Political criteria for accession and Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in Enlargement Countries, 2014-2020.</p> <p>Alignment of CSF objectives with the needs of civil society.</p>	<p>Objectives of the CSF are identifiable in EU, country and sector</p> <p>Strategies</p> <p>Policy documents, incl. EU CS Guidelines</p> <p>Programme documents.</p> <p>Evidence of alignment between civil society stated needs and CSF programme frameworks, incl. EU CS Guidelines.</p> <p>Evidence of the involvement of CSOs in need assessments, definition of strategies and other relevant aspects of the intervention logic.</p> <p>Examples of gaps between the CSF aims and objectives and EU accession frameworks.</p>	<p>Documents - MIPDs/ CSPs; CSF programme; country/ sector strategies; administrative data from DG NEAR, EUDs, and national authorities; Enlargement Progress Reports, Monitoring and Evaluation Reports, Mid-term FPA review report, ROM reports, EU CS Guidelines baseline and annual reports/survey.</p> <p>Structured interviews with DG NEAR, EUDs, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and CSF beneficiaries.</p> <p>Survey results/ responses.</p> <p>Interview/responses.</p>
2. To what extent are objectives at different levels (strategic, MIPDs and programmes) clear, measurable and realistic?	<p>Quality of CSF intervention logic.</p> <p>Formulation of SMART indicators at all levels.</p>	<p>Clarity of relationship between planned results, specific objectives and overall objectives.</p> <p>Evidence of objectives and expected results fulfilling necessary standards and quality requirements.</p>	<p>Documents - MIPDs/ CSPs; CSF programme; country/ sector strategies; administrative data from DG NEAR, EUDs, and national authorities; Enlargement Progress Reports, Monitoring and Evaluation Reports, Mid-term FPA review</p>

Evaluation Questions (EQ)	Judgement Criteria (JC)	Judgement Indicators	Sources of Information
		Evidence of indicators and expected results fulfilling necessary standards and quality requirements (e.g. SMART).	report, ROM reports, EU CS Guidelines baseline and annual reports/survey.
3. To what extent does programming take adequate and relevant account of assistance provided and reforms promoted by other (key) donors? (Also pertinent to discussions of coordination/ complementarity.)	<p>Linkage of EC support to programming documents with other key donors' strategies</p> <p>Existence of donor coordination mechanisms/practices (at sectoral, national, international level) for programming and implementation of CSF.</p> <p>Existence and use of strategies ensuring coherence and complementarity between EU, national and other donor funds.</p>	<p>Evidence of the existence and use of donor coordination mechanisms/ aid coordination structures.</p> <p>Evidence of collaboration among donors.</p> <p>Evidence that resources are being leveraged with other donors/ beneficiary budgets.</p>	<p>Documents - MIPDs/ CSPs; CSF programme; country/ sector strategies; administrative data from DG NEAR, EUDs, and national authorities; Enlargement Progress Reports, Monitoring and Evaluation Reports.</p> <p>Structured interviews with DG NEAR, EUDs, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and CSF beneficiaries.</p> <p>Survey results/ responses.</p>
Project Level			
4. To what extent has the use of the financial assistance to civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey been consistent with the objectives of the EU's support to civil society within the Enlargement Strategy?	<p>Alignment between actions of funded projects and the Copenhagen Political criteria for accession.</p> <p>Alignment between actions of funded project and the Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in Enlargement Countries, 2014-2020 results and country targets (esp. for post-2013 projects).</p> <p>Consistency of and correlation between CSF objectives and priorities and the stated objectives of funded projects.</p>	<p>Evidence of EU strategies and policy frameworks/ priorities in the design of funded projects.</p> <p>Objectives of the CSF are identifiable in project designs/ logical frameworks.</p>	<p>Documents - MIPDs/ CSPs; CSF programme; country/ sector strategies; administrative data from DG NEAR, EUDs, and national authorities; Enlargement Progress Reports, Monitoring and Evaluation Reports.</p> <p>Structured interviews with DG NEAR, EUDs, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and CSF beneficiaries.</p>
5. To what extent does the financial assistance respond to the specific needs of civil society in the targeted sectors ?	Degree to which the CSF objectives and priorities are based on/ linked with the stated objectives of funded projects.	Evidence that the outputs and outcomes of funded projects correlate to defined/ assessed needs per country assessments and CSF documentation.	Documents - MIPDs/ CSPs; CSF programme; country/ sector strategies; administrative data from DG NEAR, EUDs, and national authorities; Enlargement Progress

Evaluation Questions (EQ)	Judgement Criteria (JC)	Judgement Indicators	Sources of Information
	<p>Degree to which civil society priorities are reflected in the objectives of funded projects.</p> <p>Correlation between CSF objectives and priorities and the stated objectives of funded projects.</p> <p>Integration of civil society needs into relevant country and sector strategies and programmes, policies and legislation.</p> <p>Description of the main gaps/ weaknesses between the current programming framework and accession/ EU/ beneficiary frameworks.</p>	<p>Evidence of the involvement of CSOs in need assessments, definition of strategies and other relevant aspects of the intervention logic.</p> <p>The CSF programme reflects and makes reference to outcomes of needs assessments prepared as part of the programming process.</p>	<p>Reports, Monitoring and Evaluation Reports.</p> <p>Structured interviews with DG NEAR, EUDs, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and CSF beneficiaries.</p> <p>Survey results/ responses.</p>
Efficiency			
<p>6. To what extent has the provided financial assistance reached grassroots and community-based organisations?</p>	<p>Balance of programme coverage per the type, size and profile of supported organisations.</p> <p>Requirements of calls for proposals – specifically criteria for organisations eligible to apply – allow and/ or require applicants to represent grassroots and community-based organisations.</p> <p>Frameworks for CSF calls for proposals contribute to the selection of good quality projects by grassroots and community-based organisations.</p>	<p>Eligibility requirements for calls for proposals.</p> <p>Administrative arrangements applied for CSF calls for proposals.</p> <p>The provided support is sufficient in timeframe for the beneficiary organisation to complete their programme.</p> <p>The provided financial support is sufficient for the beneficiary organisation to complete their programme.</p> <p>The relevance and availability of call/ project conditions (e.g. easier application process, availability of the process in local language) that grassroots and community-based organizations are able to meet.</p>	<p>Documents - MIPDs/ CSPs; CSF programme; country/ sector strategies; administrative data from DG NEAR, EUDs, and national authorities; Enlargement Progress Reports, Monitoring and Evaluation Reports.</p> <p>Structured interviews with DG NEAR, EUDs, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and CSF beneficiaries.</p> <p>Survey results/ responses.</p>
<p>7. To what extent has DG NEAR used an appropriate mix of</p>	<p>CSF calls for proposals contribute to the selection of diverse thematic grants.</p>	<p>Evidence of effectiveness in administrative arrangements</p>	<p>Documents - MIPDs/ CSPs; CSF programme; country/ sector</p>

Evaluation Questions (EQ)	Judgement Criteria (JC)	Judgement Indicators	Sources of Information
<p>funding instruments to reach the stated objectives of CSF support?</p>	<p>The CSF project portfolio is diverse in terms of thematic focus of grants, types and size of funded organisations.</p> <p>CSF calls for proposals address civil society needs and constraints as identified and formulated in EU and national strategies, policies.</p> <p>Extent to which non-grant instruments (TA, financing contribution to third parties etc.) are providing synergy and added value (gap-filling) to the grant project interventions.</p>	<p>applied for CSF calls for proposals that include a wide range of CSO involvement.</p> <p>Quality and performance of project selection processes in terms of diversity of thematic grants.</p> <p>Evidence of diverse thematic grant schemes developed and implemented that demonstrate a balanced range of CSO participants and project objectives.</p>	<p>strategies; administrative data from DG NEAR, EUDs, and national authorities; Enlargement Progress Reports, Monitoring and Evaluation Reports; administrative data from DG NEAR.</p> <p>Structured interviews with DG NEAR, EUDs, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and CSF beneficiaries.</p> <p>Survey results/ responses.</p>
<p>8. To what extent is the provided financial assistance flexible enough to respond to changing needs?</p>	<p>EU assistance has facilitated the timely attainment of planned results and has been flexible to changing needs of CSOs.</p> <p>EU assistance has responded to needs of more flexible, longer-term aid modalities based on CSOs needs.</p>	<p>Evidence of flexibility of the CSF support as result of the changing needs of the CSOs.</p> <p>Evidence of consultation with different stakeholders to address the changes in the programme as a result of changing CSO needs.</p> <p>Evidence of use of simplified/ targeted application procedures.</p> <p>Extent of diversification of requirements related to minimum co-financing requirements/ arrangements.</p> <p>Extent of long-term and variety of aid modalities used to support CSOs.</p> <p>Extent of the use of arrangements allowing/ encouraging the use of local languages.</p>	<p>Documents - MIPDs/ CSPs; CSF programme; country/ sector strategies; administrative data from DG NEAR, EUDs, and national authorities; Enlargement Progress Reports, Monitoring and Evaluation Reports.</p> <p>Structured interviews with DG NEAR, EUDs, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and CSF beneficiaries.</p> <p>Survey results/ responses.</p>
<p>Effectiveness</p>			

Evaluation Questions (EQ)	Judgement Criteria (JC)	Judgement Indicators	Sources of Information
<p>9. To what extent is the financial assistance contributing to addressing the needs and priorities of the civil society sector? (Focus on civil society.)</p>	<p>Evident contribution of CSF assistance to civil society development, including the development of links between national strategies/ measures/ action plans and civil society development/ strategies/ planning.</p> <p>Correlation between CSF and country needs assessment documents/studies and assessments on the enabling environment in which they operate.</p>	<p>Evidence of improved/ new links between the needs and priorities of the civil society sector and CSF objectives/ strategic priorities.</p> <p>Evidence of improvements in interactions between beneficiary CSOs and government/ public authorities or cases of improved sectoral (CSO-CSO) and inter-sectoral (trade unions, business etc.) cooperation where CSO-government cooperation is limited/non-existent/adversarial.</p>	<p>Documents - MIPDs/ CSPs; CSF programme; country/ sector strategies; administrative data from DG NEAR, EUDs, and national authorities; Enlargement Progress Reports, Monitoring and Evaluation Reports; administrative data from DG NEAR.</p> <p>Structured interviews with DG NEAR, EUDs, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and CSF beneficiaries.</p> <p>Survey results/ responses.</p>
<p>10. To what extent is the financial assistance contributing to achievement of CSF's stated strategic objectives and priorities? (Focus on the CSF itself.)</p>	<p>Extent to which the CSF programme achieved/ is achieving its objectives.</p> <p>Identification and extent of main effects resulting from CSF.</p> <p>Extent of the reach of the CSF to grassroots organisations.</p> <p>Extent of improvements in interactions between beneficiary CSOs and government/ public authorities or cases of improved sectoral (CSO-CSO) and inter-sectoral (trade unions, business etc.) cooperation where CSO-government cooperation is limited/non-existent/adversarial.</p> <p>Extent (number or examples) of initiatives undertaken by CSOs in EU Acquis policy areas.</p>	<p>Evidence of progress towards objectives stated in programming and strategic documents.</p> <p>Evidence of visible achievements for society stemming from project delivery.</p> <p>Prevailing observed changes:</p> <p>Civil society development and local democracy.</p> <p>Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth.</p> <p>Good governance, PAR and public financial management, rule of law and the fight against corruption.</p> <p>Media and freedom of expression.</p> <p>Reconciliation and cultural dialogue.</p>	<p>Documents - MIPDs/ CSPs; CSF programme; country/ sector strategies; administrative data from DG NEAR, EUDs, and national authorities; Enlargement Progress Reports, Monitoring and Evaluation Reports; administrative data from DG NEAR.</p> <p>Structured interviews with DG NEAR, EUDs, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and CSF beneficiaries.</p> <p>Survey results/ responses.</p>

Evaluation Questions (EQ)	Judgement Criteria (JC)	Judgement Indicators	Sources of Information
<p>11. To what extent are the different implementation instruments effective in providing support to civil society?</p>	<p>Extent of CSO acknowledgement that different types of instruments provide better options for use of funding and success of outcomes.</p> <p>CSF calls for proposals contribute to the selection of diverse thematic grants.</p> <p>The CSF project portfolio is diverse in terms of thematic focus of grants, types and size of funded organisations.</p> <p>CSF calls for proposals address civil society needs and constraints as identified and formulated in EU and national strategies, policies.</p>	<p>Environment, climate action, energy and agriculture.</p> <p>Identifiable effects from the different implementation instruments.</p> <p>Examples of outputs/ outcomes/ impact from any specific instrument and its use in a project:</p> <p>Short, medium and long-term action grants</p> <p>Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs)</p> <p>Operating grants</p> <p>Direct grants to International Organisations and CSOs</p> <p>Technical Assistance (TACSO + TA for Gov/EC, EUD).</p> <p>Comparison of the number of projects delivered by the different instruments in terms of outputs, reach, types of stakeholders/ participants.</p>	<p>Documents - MIPDs/ CSPs; CSF programme; country/ sector strategies; administrative data from DG NEAR, EUDs, and national authorities; Enlargement Progress Reports, Monitoring and Evaluation Reports; administrative data from DG NEAR.</p> <p>Structured interviews with DG NEAR, EUDs, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and CSF beneficiaries.</p> <p>Survey results/ responses.</p>
<p>Impact</p>			
<p>12. What have been the impacts of the CSF to date?</p>	<p>Identification of differences in the achievement/ extent of impacts attributable to certain thematic areas, implementation instruments.</p> <p>Extent to which there has been an effect on the policies and/ or other measures of public authorities in relation to civil society development and the enabling environment in which CSOs operate.</p>	<p>Type, quality/ quantity of intended and unintended impacts, specifically attributable to the specific thematic areas and/ or implementation instruments of the CSF.</p> <p>Evidence of CSO engagement with national/ local authorities in sector/ Aquis related achievements,</p>	<p>Documents - MIPDs/ CSPs; CSF programme; country/ sector strategies; administrative data from DG NEAR, EUDs, and national authorities; Enlargement Progress Reports, Monitoring and Evaluation Reports; administrative data from DG NEAR.</p>

Evaluation Questions (EQ)	Judgement Criteria (JC)	Judgement Indicators	Sources of Information
	<p>Extent of CSF contribution to increases in human and institutional capacity in CSOs.</p> <p>Extent of CSF contributions to achievement of the objectives and priorities for the development of civil society, in line with EU and national strategies.</p> <p>Extent to which the CSF affected public policies and/ or has impacted on the enabling environment in which civil society operates.</p>	<p>including policy initiatives, innovative approaches, etc.</p> <p>Evidence of new CSO capacities (human, institutional, financial, policy etc.).</p> <p>Evidence of progress made in achieving EU and national aims, objectives and priorities.</p> <p>Evidence of change in the conditions in which CSOs operate.</p>	<p>Structured interviews with DG NEAR, EUDs, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and CSF beneficiaries.</p> <p>Survey results/ responses.</p>
<p>13. Are regional networks funded through the CSF effectively advocating for policy reforms in the Western Balkans and Turkey?</p>	<p>Extent to which initiatives have been effective in advocating in terms of the policies and/ or other measures of public authorities in relation to civil society development and the enabling environment in which civil society operates.</p> <p>Extent of CSF contributions to achievement of the objectives and priorities for the development of civil society, in line with EU and national strategies.</p> <p>Extent to which the CSF affected public policies and/ or has impacted on the enabling environment in which civil society operates.</p>	<p>Evidence of formal/ informal engagement of regional civil society networks with national authorities.</p> <p>Evidence of policy advocacy initiatives by regional CSO regional.</p> <p>Evidence of policy changes/ reform in areas of engagement by regional CSO networks.</p> <p>Evidence of complementarity between the actions of regional networks funded through the CSF and national CSO actions.</p> <p>Evidence of advocacy initiatives that would not be realised in the absence of CSF.</p>	<p>Documents - MIPDs/ CSPs; CSF programme; country/ sector strategies; administrative data from DG NEAR, EUDs, and national authorities; Enlargement Progress Reports, Monitoring and Evaluation Reports; administrative data from DG NEAR.</p> <p>Structured interviews with DG NEAR, EUDs, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and CSF beneficiaries.</p> <p>Survey results/ responses.</p>
<p>14. What factors are there that contribute to or hamper impact?</p>	<p>External factors that have contributed/detracted to impact.</p> <p>Elements of CSF design or implementation that have contributed to or detracted from impact.</p>	<p>Type, quantity of factors (positive/negative) influencing outcomes/ impact.</p> <p>Evidence of administrative processes that have contributed to or detracted from outcomes/ impact.</p>	<p>Structured interviews with DG NEAR, EUDs, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and CSF beneficiaries.</p> <p>Survey results/ responses.</p>

Evaluation Questions (EQ)	Judgement Criteria (JC)	Judgement Indicators	Sources of Information
		Evidence of the existence of an enabling environment for the functioning of CSOs in beneficiary countries.	
Sustainability			
15. To what extent are the impacts noted to date sustainable and likely to continue producing effects after the end of CSF assistance?	<p>Extent to which the results achieved in the framework of the CSF are indicating a sustainability of action/ output.</p> <p>Extent to which there are visible prospects of sustainability of change (or reversal) in terms of CSF strategic priorities.</p> <p>Evidence of the visible effects of CSF assistance on CSO capacity to be effective, accountable and independent actors.</p>	<p>Evidence of sustainability of output/ outcome from the ongoing CSF assistance.</p> <p>Gaps or areas of weakness where improvements are required.</p>	<p>Structured interviews with DG NEAR, EUDs, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and CSF beneficiaries.</p> <p>Survey results/ responses.</p>
Cross-cutting Issues			
16. Is there a sufficient and effective focus in CSF funding on human rights and gender equality?	<p>Extent of priority on gender in CSF guidelines.</p> <p>Extent of visibility of human rights in CSF programming priorities and frameworks.</p>	<p>Evidence of sufficient and effective focus in the CSF guidelines, calls for proposals, etc on gender and human rights.</p> <p>Extent to which initiatives funded through the CSF are designed with sufficient focus on gender equality and human rights.</p> <p>Extent to which initiatives funded through the CSF are implemented with sufficient focus on gender equality and human rights.</p>	<p>Documents - MIPDs/ CSPs; CSF programme; country/ sector strategies; administrative data from DG NEAR, EUDs, and national authorities; Enlargement Progress Reports, Monitoring and Evaluation Reports; administrative data from DG NEAR.</p> <p>Structured interviews with DG NEAR, EUDs, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and CSF beneficiaries.</p> <p>Survey results/ responses.</p>
Environment			
17. Is there a sufficient and effective focus in CSF guidelines on the environment?	Extent of priority on the environment in CSF guidelines.	Evidence of sufficient and effective focus in the CSF guidelines, calls for proposals, etc on the environment.	Documents - MIPDs/ CSPs; CSF programme; country/ sector strategies; administrative data from

Evaluation Questions (EQ)	Judgement Criteria (JC)	Judgement Indicators	Sources of Information
		<p>Extent to which initiatives funded through the CSF are designed with sufficient focus on environment</p> <p>Extent to which initiatives funded through the CSF are implemented with sufficient focus on environment.</p>	<p>DG NEAR, EUDs, and national authorities; Enlargement Progress Reports, Monitoring and Evaluation Reports; administrative data from DG NEAR.</p> <p>Structured interviews with DG NEAR, EUDs, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and CSF beneficiaries.</p> <p>Survey results/ responses.</p>
Coherence, Coordination And Consistency			
<p>18. To what extent are the different national and regional actions of the CSF programme coherent/ complementing/ overlapping?</p>	<p>CSF aims and objectives are complementary to the aims and objectives of programmes funded by other donors and public authorities in beneficiary countries.</p> <p>CSF aims and objectives are complementary to the aims and objectives of other EU initiatives (EIDHR, CBC, IPA bilateral programmes, etc.)</p> <p>Level of visible work among CSF leadership/ management and other donors in coordinating areas of focus.</p>	<p>Evidence of complementarity in design and implementation of the CSF programme and the programme of other donors.</p> <p>Evidence of complementarity in design and implementation of the CSF programme and other EU funded initiatives.</p> <p>Evidence of a focus among donor agencies on ensuring awareness of the priorities and focus of each other's work and on systems/ approaches that build complementarity without overlap.</p>	<p>Documents - MIPDs/ CSPs; CSF programme; country/ sector strategies; administrative data from DG NEAR, EUDs, and national authorities; Enlargement Progress Reports, Monitoring and Evaluation Reports; administrative data from DG NEAR.</p> <p>Structured interviews with DG NEAR, EUDs, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and CSF beneficiaries.</p> <p>Survey results/ responses.</p>
<p>19. To what extent do supported projects ensure fulfilment of the visibility strategy set by the European Commission?</p>	<p>Extent to which CSF guidelines are clear about the visibility strategy and the responsibilities of funded bodies.</p> <p>Extent to which projects funded through the CSF have a clear EU visibility approach and outcomes.</p> <p>Extent to which stakeholders are aware the role of the EU in project implementation.</p>	<p>Evidence of guidelines in CSF funding approaches.</p> <p>Evidence of visibility strategies in funded projects.</p> <p>Evidence of EU visibility activities in funded projects.</p>	<p>Documents - MIPDs/ CSPs; CSF programme; country/ sector strategies; administrative data from DG NEAR, EUDs, and national authorities; Enlargement Progress Reports, Monitoring and Evaluation Reports; administrative data from DG NEAR.</p>

Evaluation Questions (EQ)	Judgement Criteria (JC)	Judgement Indicators	Sources of Information
	Extent to which stakeholders are aware of EU priorities in relation to civil society development.	Evidence that the CSF program has ensured the fulfilment of the visibility strategy set by the European Commission.	Structured interviews with DG NEAR, EUDs, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and CSF beneficiaries. Survey results/ responses.
Added Value			
20. What value is added to the work and initiatives of beneficiary countries compared to that which might be achieved without the contributions of the CSF?	Extent of coordination and contribution between CSF and national/ municipal initiatives. Extent of outcome from initiatives where the CSF makes a visible contribution to national/ municipal initiatives.	Evidence of specific additional outputs/ outcomes from joint approaches. Evidence of coordination and dialogue between national/ municipal authorities local beneficiaries of CSF funding support.	Structured interviews with DG NEAR, EUDs, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and CSF beneficiaries. Survey results/ responses.
Lessons Learned			
21. What lessons have been learned regarding: Programming efficiency that improves prospects of meeting objectives. Strengthening the link between the needs and priorities of the civil society sector and CSF. Strengthening the active involvement of civil society in policy and related activities. Improvements to the reach of the CSF to grassroots organisations. Improvements in interactions between civil society and government/public authorities. Improvements in/ impact on EU reform related legislation and its implementation (making effective fulfilment of EU accession criteria).			Documents - Enlargement Progress Reports, Monitoring and Evaluation Reports. Structured interviews with DG NEAR, EUDs, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and CSF beneficiaries. Survey results/ responses.

Table 4 - Evaluation matrix

7.14 Annex/ Appendix 14 – Findings and Recommendations For The CSF Database

7.14.1 The project database

The basis of all field phase processes, as well as of the evaluation's analysis of the work of the CSF, was built on the structure and contents of the CSF Project Database (CSF List of Contracts 2011-2015.xls), provided to the evaluation team by DG NEAR. This original document was supplemented by further project data, related to projects contracted during 2016, that was provided subsequently by DG NEAR, with additional information provided by a number of EUDs.

As well as providing base data, the database itself is an area of enquiry for the evaluation. The evaluation Terms of Reference underline that the database provided by DG NEAR would be used, and, if needed, updated and further elaborated during the inception, field and synthesis phases.

In addition, the Terms of Reference seek operational recommendations, among others, on corrective measures needed in order to improve the implementation and monitoring of ongoing actions (page 5 of the ToR). This requirement was discussed in the evaluation Kick-off Meeting and requirements for this task were subsequently further clarified. The evaluation is not expected to develop an IT tool, but the structure of the database is a focus of the evaluation work, with a view to provide clear recommendations, such as classification criteria and user interface, in the form of an *ad hoc* technical assessment aimed at improving and reinforcing, in order to facilitate utility of the database, including possible linkage with CRIS.

7.14.1.1 Current Situation

The database as provided is an MS Excel spreadsheet, although it is based on the EU's CRIS database. The database includes the following fields, in the spreadsheet columns:

- Allocation – the EC funding source for the contract. From CRIS.
- Domain – In the database the domain for all projects is IPA. From CRIS.
- Contract Year – Year. From CRIS.
- Contract Number – Number. From CRIS.
- Status – Open or Closed. From CRIS.
- Title – the Project's title. From CRIS.
- Partners – Organisations in partnership on the project.
- No (all) – the number of partners.
- Nationality – category for the nationalities of all project partners.
- Contractor's signature day – date of signature.
- Implementation Starting date – start date.
- End date of activities – planned end date.
- Duration – duration.
- Description – includes statements of objectives.
- Nature – categorisation of type of action.
- Contract type – categorisation of type of contract.
- Amount (EUR) – Contract amount.
- Paid EUR – payments to contractor to date.
- Balance EUR – (text field, not calculation)
- Percentage – remaining percentage (text field, not calculation).
- Location – Project location (text field, no data validation approaches).
- Key points of the action – a variation on 'Description'(text field, no data validation approaches).
- Field – a categorisation of content of a Project (text field, no data validation approaches).

Each contract is contained in one row of the spreadsheet.

7.14.1.2 Key Areas of Concern with The Structure and Content of the Database

7.14.1.2.1 Unstructured Data

Lack of data validation approaches (structured data/ drop down lists) inhibits possibilities for analysis. For example, the 362 contracts in the database can be sorted in over 200 different combinations in the Nationality column. It is very difficult to actually undertake an aggregation/ analysis of partnerships with this data structure. This is further visible when using the database in conjunction with the partner spreadsheet titled Organizations Involved in the Contracts from the CSF Allocations 2011-2015 (Organized by Nationality):

- Organisation names do not necessarily correlate between this spreadsheet and the database.
- Double entry of contract numbers and partner names lends itself to incorrect entries, and therefore an inability to correlate the two databases, a factor experienced by the evaluation team and likely a factor which impacts on EUDs and DG NEAR.

The same issue is apparent in the Location column, where the currently allowed text entry format means any combination of any group of countries is possible, which then significantly hampers later aggregations/ analysis of the geographical location of contracts across the CSF.

The thematic focus of contracts (column W, Field) also currently allows entry in a text format with any content, which again makes it virtually impossible to aggregate/ analyse the thematic focus of contracts across the CSF. For the purpose of the evaluation, the evaluation team undertook its own analysis of the Field column and contract data and created a 'Theme' category that enabled the analysis of focus and content of contracts/ projects. Thematic focus should be defined only from selections available from a drop down list (and should be determined in advance by CSF management, as a way of ensuring an effective analysis of CSF thematic data). Use of these pre-defined (but relatively unlimited) definitions would enable much greater utilisation of data on the focus of projects for use by EUDs and NG NEAR in CSF reporting.

7.14.1.2.2 Multiple Pieces of Data In Specific Cells

The current database allows, and has, more than one piece of data in any given cell – a problem similar to the discussion at Unstructured Data above. The most important issue here is that the database simply does not allow any analysis for any of the fields (columns) where this situation exists. It is simply not possible to know, in an aggregated sense across the CSF, about partners, project locations, project thematic focus, etc.

7.14.1.2.3 Field Limitations

Limitations to the numbers of fields (columns) available, which inhibits possibilities for analysis. For example, incorporating more detailed location definitions, types of organisations, types of partnerships, etc. would also enable much greater utilisation of data on the focus of projects for use by EUDs and NG NEAR in CSF reporting.

7.14.1.2.4 Use of MS Excel

A purpose-designed, purpose-built management information system (MIS) has the potential for much greater utility. Such an approach need not be overly complex, indeed, complexity will need to be carefully avoided, but such an approach can provide much greater user friendliness/ usability, for both inputs (of data) and outputs (notably reporting). It is understood that a range of fields (columns) in the provided database come from CRIS, and not surprisingly these fields fulfil structured data requirements and are able to be analysed. Without use of a purpose-designed, purpose-built MIS, at the very least the MS Excel database must be restructured using data validation approaches across all fields (columns).

7.14.1.2.5 Contact Details/ Partner Details

There are a number of areas of concern in relation to information on contracted organisations/ implementing partners. These areas of concern include:

- Incompleteness of organisational/ partner data.
- Duplication of organisational/ partner data.
- Inability of organisational/ partner data to be extracted in a reasonably straightforward way.
- Inability of organisational/ partner data to be effectively analysed.
- Lack of ease in accessing relevant, up-to-date contact information for contracted partners.

This last point was of particular note to the evaluation, as the approaches to enquiry for the evaluation required communication with organisations funded by the CSF. This communication was difficult. The database contains no contact details for partners in contracts, neither coordinating partners nor others.

Contact information is stored/ maintained in different ways, depending on the specific needs of an EUD or DG NEAR. Indeed, there is no specific contact list for organisations contracted to deliver projects with CSF funding. Further, the names of all partners in a contract are stored in one cell in the database. Where more than partner names are held in the database, these too are stored in this single cell. Information visible in this cell varies widely across country and contract. In some instances the only information is the name of the lead partner. In other circumstances, names, contact details, company registration details, etc., for all partners, can be found in this cell.

7.14.1.3 PADOR, Prospect and OPSYS

Field analysis related to the database included discussions about the how the CSF's excel-based database and PADOR, Prospect and OPSYS are related to each other, how they can (or cannot) interact and the prospect for future linkages (or inclusion of the CSF database directly in any of these) as a way of addressing both data management and system coherence. Following these discussions, and analysis of the information received, it is the conclusion of the evaluation that these systems cannot address the needs of the CSF. PADOR is not an MIS, in the sense required for managing CSF data. The evaluation team is of the view that the Contact Details/ Partner Details discussed above can and should be held in PADOR, or linked to PADOR, as noted below. Prospect will not be updated or upgraded at any point, as it is to be replaced by OPSYS, and in that sense there is no need to canvass any developments. The greatest concern with OPSYS development is the timeframe for its initiation. It is simply not clear that OPSYS will be functional within a timeframe that is reasonable for the needs of the CSF. In addition to this, there is no discussion currently ongoing about addressing the issues with the CSF database within OPSYS – such discussions would have to happen with some urgency if OPSYS, when it is finally operational, is to include a specific area or areas related to CSF data management.

As a result, the evaluation recommends the development of a purpose-built MIS solely for the CSF. While it is the view of the evaluation that this MIS should be linked directly to PADOR for contact information, and should ultimately be linked as well to OPSYS, it is not seen as appropriate for there to be any delay in first scoping a purpose-built MIS and, subsequent to this work to have the MIS tendered, designed and implemented.

7.14.1.4 Database Enhancement – Areas Of improvement To The Database – Structured Administrative Data

7.14.1.4.1 Management Information System – MIS

Research into the design and implementation of a management information system (MIS) for the CSF is warranted. It is well worth noting that a programme the size and complexity of the CSF does not require an overly complex MIS that would take years to analyse, design and implement. What is critical, as indicated above, is that the full range of critical data on a contract is available, in structured form, and is able to be aggregated and analysed by an EUD, or globally. Areas of critical concern in the building of an MIS for the CSF are:

- Partner Organisation Data (maybe in a link with PADOR, maybe a specific table in a CSF database)
 - Data on organisational type
 - Data on organisation location
 - Data on organisation status
 - Legal data
 - A full range of contact data (with consideration given to allowing/ requiring funded organisations to maintain the information on their organisation in this area of the database themselves).
- Data on the focus of specific Calls
 - Structured data on the thematic emphasis – nature of the Call
 - Structured data on eligibility
 - Structured data on the instrument of the Call
- Data on awarded contracts
 - Title
 - Description
 - Nature – Linked to the specific of the Call
 - Financial data on each award
 - Data on contract start and end dates
 - Status

- Links back to implementing partners (and the related data on partner organisations)
- Financial data
 - Linked to the contract and the call

7.14.1.5 Database Enhancement – Areas of improvement to the Database – Results-based Data

As outlined in the Inception Report, the EU Results Framework (EU RF) is a tool that has been introduced by DEVCO in order measure results achieved against strategic development objectives; it should be understood as an articulation of the different levels of results expected from the implementation of a strategy, in the overall realm of EU's External Action. With this in mind, the list of development sectors covered by the EU RF has been defined to reflect the policy priorities of the EU international cooperation and development assistance as set out in the Agenda for Change in particular. It covers twelve areas and sectors and is associated with 16 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) corresponding to EU policy priorities. This framework is to provide information on aggregated key results achieved with EU assistance.

The publication of this information⁸³ increases accountability and transparency and demonstrates to external stakeholders how the EU contributes to development progress in the countries and regions to which it provides development assistance, on the one hand, and it provides relevant information to inform internal management decisions, on the other hand, thus strengthening the framework for ensuring effectiveness of EU financed development aid.

This EU RF has been introduced in all EU external action instruments managed by DEVCO, currently covering completed projects, as a first stage prior to integration of ongoing projects as well. The process involves active cooperation and contribution by ROM Contractors (different geographical ROM Lots and the thematic CMTP Lot), in close cooperation with the Operation Managers in charge of projects retained for end of project results reporting samples. DG NEAR reportedly plans to introduce the EU RF for monitoring and follow up of its ongoing projects.

- ★ DG NEAR is increasingly putting into place measures aimed to strengthen monitoring and reporting on results in line with international and EU commitments
- ★ Without effective planning and M&E, it would be impossible to judge if work is going in the right direction, whether progress and success can be claimed, and how future efforts might be improved
- ★ Planning, monitoring and evaluation come together as Results Based Management (RBM) aimed at **achieving improved performance and demonstrable results**
- ★ RBM implies a **shift from inputs to results** + a set of **iterative steps** aimed at ensuring the attainment of the desired change
- ★ The logic of intervention articulates the pathway to change: **clear definition of results, measurable indicators and systematic M&E arrangements** are key factors of success

“Managing for results: linking planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation”, presentation by DG NEAR, October-November 2016

Since the new CSF database is expected to be fully developed “from scratch”, it is proposed to assign to this tool a “results-based management” (RBM) capacity in order to allow for a qualitative monitoring of the CSF projects and of their performance (achievement of outputs and results).

The currently used support for this Results Reporting is an Excel workbook, which contains the following sections and items (spreadsheets):

Dashboard	All relevant identification data and an inter-active table of contents
Results reporting (see detailed presentation next page)	Comprehensive table with all relevant information, indicators and parameters concerning the covered Decisions and Projects: indicators, baselines, target values, final values, data sources, main results, alignment (or not) with THE EU Results Framework,

⁸³ See the 1st Report on 2013-2014 period, released in July 2016 : https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/eu-international-cooperation-and-development-first-report-selected-results-july-2013-june-2014_en

	projects' targets' achievement, quality control section, List of 32 (Level 2: Development Outcome and Outputs) EU Framework indicators by sector)
Guidance	Methodological notes
Overview of results and indicators	
List of projects	Long list of all projects taken into consideration

The data below are displayed in this "Results Reporting" component/spreadsheet of the End of Project Results Reporting Template (Excel workbook), in columns (presented here in rows):

7.14.1.5.1 Detailed Structure of the "Results Reporting" Component (Excel Worksheet)

Programme/project identification	EUD/HQ Operational Unit in charge
	Decision Number
	Contract Number
	Project/programme title
	Is it general or sector budget support
Check	Check BS and new project
Project/programme identification	Intervention logic/Expected Result
Project/programme indicators	Unique Indicator ID
	Project/programme results indicator name
	Project/programme results indicator ID
Baselines	Baseline (value)
	Baseline reference year
	Baseline for women/girls
	Baseline for men/boys
	Comments
Targets	Target (value)
	Target reference year
	Target for women/girls
	Target for men/boys
	Comments
Final Value	Latest value
	Latest value reference year
	Latest value for women/girls
	Latest value for men/boys
	Comments
Data sources	Report/data source from which results were obtained
	Have the results been independently verified?
	Please provide any other information on possible bias
Main results (main country/regional/thematic result)	EU RF Indicator
	EU RF Indicator ID
	Value for EU RF Indicator
	Explanation on any calculation to derive the value for EU RF Indicator
	Please confirm ("check") that the corresponding EU RF methodological note has been studied by both the Operational Manager and the ROM expert
	Value for women/girls

	Value for men/boys
	Comments
Project/programme target achievement	Type of indicator
	Progress %
	Target met
	Comments
Quality control	Columns earmarked for QC communication and validation

It is expected the integration of such an (or equivalent) results-based grid or matrix into the wider frame of the new CSF database would provide a comprehensive basis for a qualitative “results-based” identification and monitoring of the CSF projects, including the identification and aggregation of all significant results achieved, in line with the EU RF List. In this way, the “keystone” of the CSF projects’ inventory and monitoring would be their planned and achieved results, directly reflecting their effectiveness. This would enable further consolidation and syntheses in the frame of the overall reporting on the performance of the EU’s External Action, beyond the mere frame of the CSF and of IPA.

7.14.1.6 Database Development – Proposal for Participative Approach

As underlined above, one of the weaknesses of the current database has been absence of its shared use by both the DG NEAR and EUDs, which could have led its gradual improvement and consolidation. Instead, one could observe different situations from one country to another, with the EUDs using their different “templates” without any significant coordination. A good practice has nevertheless been observed in Montenegro, with a systematic follow up of all ongoing CSF projects, including ad hoc surveys, a process which could currently benefit from the support of the ongoing TA project.

On the other hand, TACSO (I and II) has not developed any particular and more functional database, such as could have served as basis for further enhancement and development. It is therefore assumed that the CSF database will need to be designed and developed “from scratch”; whether or not its development would be partly or fully outsourced to the upcoming TACSO III, our recommendation is to set up a participative approach, associating the DG NEAR, one pilot EUD (Montenegro) and one pilot regional network (WEBER):

- Montenegro would serve as a pilot IPA country, with the EUD participating “bottom-up” in the design and initial development of the database, in association with both the NGO Council and the Government’s NGO Development Office: this would pave the ground for their partnership towards the planned decentralization of (as recommended only certain thematic components of) the national CSF;
- The regional WEBER network, which has performed well in developing CS’ involvement in PAR, has reached a number of interesting achievements, among which identification and formulation of Indicators related to CS/PAR, done in cooperation with the IPA countries’ governments in charge of PAR. This innovation and experience could be replicated and used for the development of the database, a pilot action which could be coordinated downstream by TACSO III.

In such a partnership scheme, the DG NEAR would keep the role of coordinator and decision-making body as concerns the concept, scope and (segregated most probably) access to and use of the database, Montenegro pilot action would contribute with its country-scale (national CSF etc.) approach and WEBER/TACSO would bring relevant horizontal inputs for the construction of the typology and grids of indicators (results-oriented as proposed above).

7.15 Annex/ Appendix 15 – The Stakeholder Survey

**The European Union's IPA – Pre-accession instrument
DG NEAR**

Mid-term Evaluation of the Civil Society Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey

Stakeholder Survey Report



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**Mid-term Evaluation of the Civil Society Facility for the Western
Balkans and Turkey**

Contract N°2016/380154/1

**FWC BENEFICIARIES 2013 – LOT 7: GOVERNANCE AND HOME
AFFAIRS EuropeAid/132633/C/SER/multi**

Stakeholder Survey Report

23 June 2017

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■ Survey background and methodology

○ Background

This ad hoc survey report is a product of the *mid-term evaluation of EU support to the CSOs in the Western Balkans and Turkey*, in the frame of the Civil Society Facility and in the period 2011-2016. This report is not a formal deliverable of this evaluation, but an additional evaluation resource undertaken by the evaluation team to assist DG NEAR in its assessment processes.

Per the evaluation Terms of Reference, the *global objective* of the evaluation was to ‘assess the performance of financial assistance in achieving its objectives, and namely, its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, EU added value, coherence, complementarity and consistency as well as impact and sustainability’.

Per the evaluation ToR, the *specific objectives* of the evaluation were:

- To assess the performance of the assistance both at regional and national level, particularly as regards its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, EU added value, coherence, complementarity and consistency, impact and sustainability. The assessment of each evaluation criteria should measure achievements against indicators set up in strategic and programming documents.
- To provide an assessment of the intervention logic of EU assistance to support civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey in light of the CSOs’ needs in the region and the priorities set by DG NEAR in its policy and strategy documents. The evaluators will assess to which extent programming documents are based on a balanced and comprehensive planning of the support to civil society.

For the purpose of meeting the objectives of the evaluation, one component methodology was a survey of CSF beneficiaries. This survey was undertaken, and focused on all organisations that benefited from funding support from the CSF during the period being evaluated. This is the full report of the survey approach, implementation and outcomes.

As well as significantly contributing to the data and overall analysis of the CSF, in the main body of the Evaluation Report, this report will be appended in full to the final Evaluation Report for the assignment.

○ The survey questionnaire

The survey questionnaire comprised a section on organisation/ project data, a section for provision of feedback on the CSF, generally in line with the Evaluation Questions and a section on lessons learned and recommendations. All questions were quantitative/ multiple choice, with the exception of the questions on lessons learned and recommendations. As well, a number of questions included an option for additional, narrative comments should respondents have wished to add further detail.

The survey questionnaire had three sections:

Organisational data – with questions specifically related to the type of organisation completing the survey. CSOs in the region had 19 questions in this section, IGOs and consultancies/ firms each had 10.

Feedback on the CSF – there were 33 questions in this section, 7 on relevance, 7 on efficiency, 7 on effectiveness, 3 on impact, 3 on sustainability, 2 on cross-cutting issues and two on visibility. While the focus of these questions was quantitative responses and analysis, a number of these questions provided for a narrative component as well.

Lessons learned and recommendations – there was one question on lessons learned and one question on recommendations. Both of these questions allowed only a free text, narrative response.

To make it easier for interpretation and follow this report, the quantitative questions have been analysed as part of Section 2.1. and 2.2., while the quality questions are presented and analysed in Section 2.3. below.

○ Survey implementation

The online survey software LimeSurvey (<https://www.limesurvey.org>) was used for the survey. The survey software provided a wide range of services for the type of survey undertaken in the evaluation, including services that assisted with analysis, including skip logic, data exporting and reporting, statistical analysis and text analysis. As 800+ survey responses were sought, a technical facilitation of the analysis of the responses was critical.

○ Invitation Process and List

Email invitations were sent to each intended participant organisation. Per the Terms of Reference, this comprised a total of some 633 organisations in the region and 136 EU-based organisations. In fact, a total of 836 organisations, 685 located in the region and 149 EU-based⁸⁴ were initially targeted for the survey, although only 799 total survey invitations were sent out due to the inability to find contact details (or the closure of an organisation). The evaluation team undertook to insure that each of these organisations were invited to participate in the survey. However, the completeness and quality of contact details for the target group of funded organisations was problematic. There is no contact list for funded/contracted organisations, either within DG NEAR systems or between DG NEAR and EUDs. Contact details (notably email addresses) for *applicants*⁸⁵ are, generally, available, but not necessarily in any readily accessible electronic form. Contact details for *partners*⁸⁶ (specifically email addresses) are not, generally, available. Where there is an electronically accessible version of partner email addresses they are usually found together with a wide range of other data in a single cell in an Excel database, requiring manual extraction. The evaluation team needed to do manual research (online google searches, phone calls, requests to applicants during interviews) to get more up-to-date and useable details. The evaluation team engaged a support resource for much of this process, and ultimately the survey process in general was delayed for some time to ensure as wide a representation as possible.

Email invitations included an explanation of the intent and content of the evaluation and the survey, and a link to the online survey software. The introductory email also indicated the closing date for the survey. A follow-up strategy was developed, and follow-up communications were undertaken to encourage the greatest participation possible, although it is noted that participation was voluntary – the evaluation team had no control over the response rate.

■ Analysis of Survey Responses

The first part of the survey was composed of questions about organisations – respondents (CSF beneficiaries). The questions were divided and targeted to different types of beneficiaries included in the CSF. Since the main bulk of beneficiaries are CSOs from Western Balkans countries and Turkey, there was a specific sub-set of questions addressed to specifics of CSOs (e.g. budgets, funding sources, employee base, volunteers) with the aim to analyse the type of CSOs are able to benefit from the Programme. For IGOs, consultancy firms and EU CSO outside of WBT countries, a set of sub-questions was much shorter and basic since they are not the main target group of the Programme and their potential specificities might not be relevant and of benefit to the Programme.

○ Survey Responses

A total of 315 organisations initiated their responses process to the survey. Of these 315 organisations, 262 provided data for analysis. A total of 250 were complete responses to all questions. As well as these 250, a further 12 organisations responded in whole or in part to questions in the second section of the survey – Feedback on the CSF, without providing any organisational details. As will be seen below, the organisational analysis section makes use of the responses from the 250 completed responses and the Feedback on the CSF section also incorporates the other 12 respondents.

⁸⁴ Including Croatia.

⁸⁵ Terminology used in the CSF's Grant Application Form for the key applicant organisation.

⁸⁶ Terminology used in the CSF's Grant Application Form for other organisations formally involved in and contract to deliver the project/ contract.

○ Respondent Organisation Analysis

The **composition** of the survey respondents and its **geography** largely reflects the overall composition of CSF beneficiaries. The vast majority (91%) of respondents were CSO from WBT countries. Most respondents were from Serbia (24%), followed by FYRoM/Macedonia (20%), BiH (17%), Albania and Kosovo (each 8%) and Montenegro (8%), Turkey (4%).

The structure of CSF respondents is as expected. Majority are **registered association** (68%), foundations (12%) and networks (6%). Almost half of CSF beneficiary CSOs are established organizations, active since before 2000s (48%). Majority of CSF beneficiary CSOs are organizations with **considerable employed staff and volunteers** (35% have more than 11 staff), still majority (62%) have between 1 to 10 staff. It is encouraging to see that large majority of organizations engage volunteers, i.e. 52% organizations engage up to 10 volunteers.

Majority of CSO respondents (48%) have an **average organizational budget** of 101,000-500,000 million EUR, but there are also 21% of organizations that have annual budget of a smaller EU project (50,001-100,000 EUR). Majority of funding the beneficiaries have received from CSF is substantial, i.e. **approximates the average annual budget reported**. The **foreign funding** (54%) makes up the main source of financing of respondents. Domestic funding is present, but to a much lesser extent (13% public and 4% private). Only 5% of respondents have membership fee amongst their financing sources.

Many organizations **combine methods of their work** from providing service to their members and target groups (e.g. women, children, minorities, disabled) to watchdog activities (e.g. monitoring and advocacy for change of policy, laws) equally.

Most (41%) CSF beneficiaries have **not previously implemented** a CSF projects and have experience as partners (55%) in one project. 42% organizations reported implementing projects of duration over 2 years (24 months) and more.

The CSF has largely been focused on **supporting partnerships and networking** and this is also reflected by the structure of the survey respondents, i.e. 42% respondents have participated to projects with networking between CSOs in the country, 38% with other WBT countries and 12% with EU MS partners. Majority of respondents have implemented projects under a range of (short, medium or long-term) **action grant instrument**), i.e. 58% of respondents.

Similarly, as per the **CSF thematic portfolio**, most respondents (35%) implemented project is “civil society development and local democracy” sector, but other sector have been equally represented.

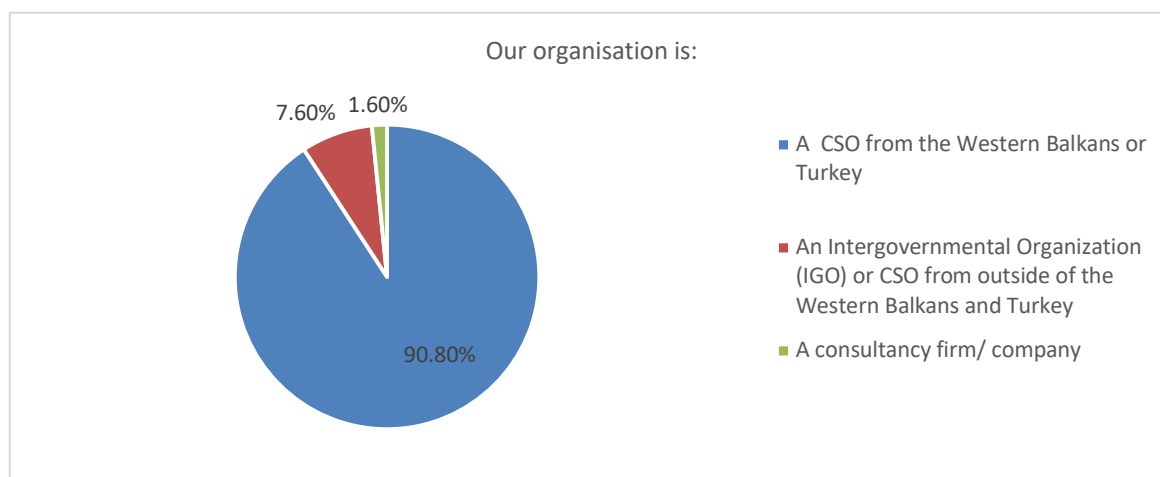
A number of questions were asked of organisations responding to the survey, including questions about their location, what type of organisation they are, their financing sources, how many staff they employ, etc. These questions are analysed below. In this way, the survey enabled a good comprehension about the range and type of CSOs and other organisations in the Western Balkan countries, Turkey and other locations benefiting from the Programme. The data below incorporates responses from CSOs, IGOs and consultancies/ firms.

▪ **Question 1**

Count and percentage of responses

Our organisation is:	Count	Percentage
A CSO from the Western Balkans or Turkey	227	90.80%
An Intergovernmental Organisation (IGO) or CSO from outside of the Western Balkans and Turkey	19	7.60%
A consultancy firm/ company	4	1.60%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

There were 250 respondents to the survey, i.e. that provided complete answers to all questions. The vast majority, 227 or 91% were CSOs from the Western Balkans and Turkey, 19 or 8% were either Intergovernmental Organisations (IGO) or CSOs from outside of the Western Balkans and Turkey, while 4 (or 2% of) entities answering were a consultancy company. Thus, the composition of the survey largely reflects the overall composition of CSF beneficiaries, of which vast majority are CSOs from the Western Balkans and Turkey and only a small proportion are other types of entities, i.e. EU MS CSOs, IGO, consultancies.

▪ Question 2

Count and percentage of responses

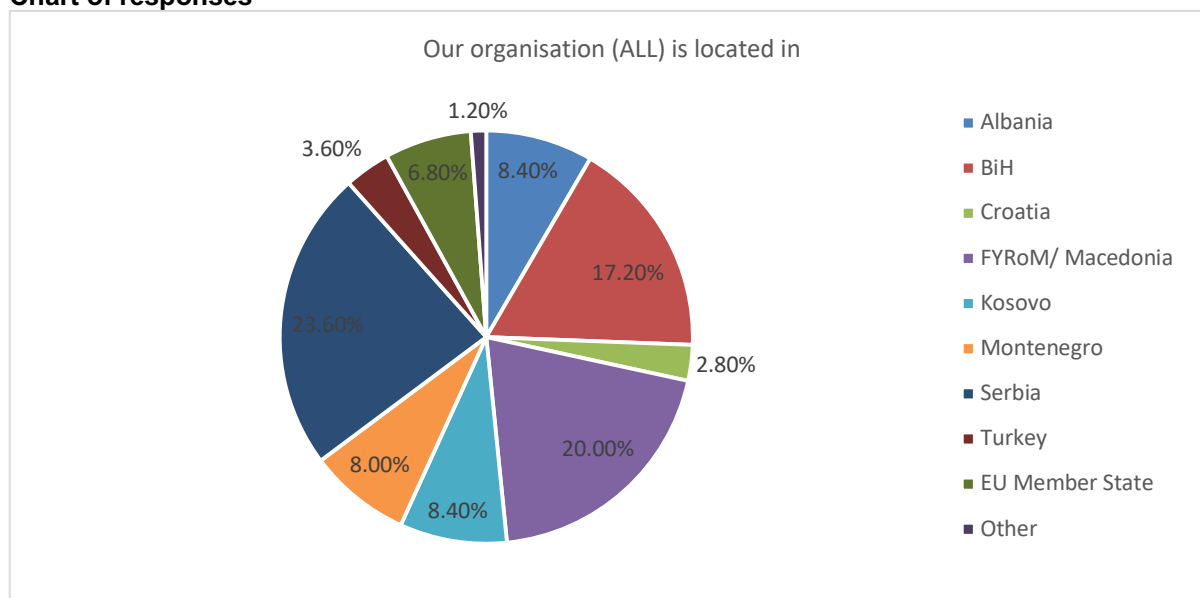
Our organisation (ALL) is located in:		
	Count	Percentage
Albania	21	8.40%
BiH	43	17.20%
Croatia	7	2.80%
FYRoM/ Macedonia	50	20.00%
Kosovo	21	8.40%
Montenegro	20	8.00%
Serbia	59	23.60%
Turkey	9	3.60%
EU Member State	17	6.80%
Other	3	1.20%

250

Our organisation (CSOs in WBT) is located in:		
	Count	Percentage
Albania	21	9.25%
BiH	42	18.50%
Croatia	7	3.08%
FYRoM/ Macedonia	50	22.03%
Kosovo	21	9.25%
Montenegro	20	8.81%
Serbia	56	24.67%
Turkey	8	3.52%
EU Member States	1	0.44%
Other	1	0.44%

Our organisation (IGO, consultancy, CSO from outside WBT) is located in:		
	Count	Percentage
EU	16	69.57%
USA	1	4.35%
Other (WBT countries)	6	26.09%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

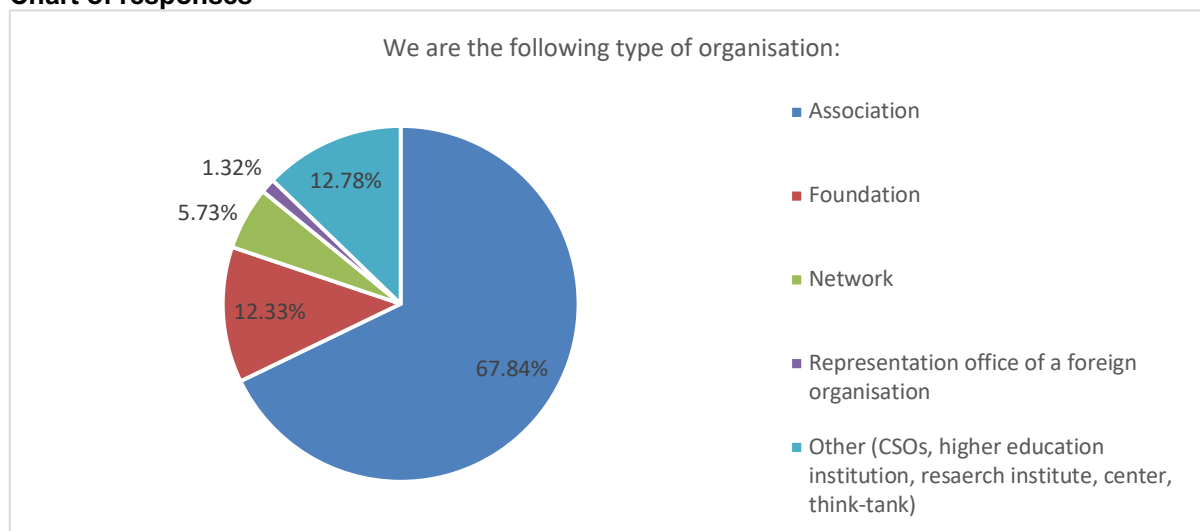
The geographic location of survey respondents largely corresponds to the overall composition of real geographic (country) disposition of CSF projects in the evaluation period. The largest portion of respondents comes from Serbia (59 or 24%), followed by FYRoM/Macedonia (50 or 20%), BiH (43 or 17%), Albania and Kosovo (each 41 or 8%) and Montenegro (20 or 8%), Turkey (9 or 4%). EU MS (17 or 7%), Croatia (7 or 4%) or Other (3 or 1%) are also present, but to a smaller extent. The composition also follows the same line when analysing CSOs from the Western Balkans and Turkey, while the entities coming from IGOs, consultancies, CSO from outside the Western Balkans and Turkey are as expected based either in EU (16 or 70%), US (1 or 4%) and to a smaller extent in the Western Balkans and Turkey (6 or 26%).

▪ **Question 3**

Count and percentage of responses

We are the following type of organisation:		
	Count	Percentage
Association	154	67.84%
Foundation	28	12.33%
Network	13	5.73%
Representation office of a foreign organisation	3	1.32%
Other (CSOs, higher education institution, research institute, centre, think-tank)	29	12.78%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

Among CSOs from the Western Balkans and Turkey, the majority stated that they are registered as an association (154 or 68%), followed by foundations (28 or 12%) and networks (13 or 6%). Several CSF beneficiaries are registered as representative offices of foreign organisation (3 or 1%) or Other (29 or 13%) a specific type of CSOs as allowed by local legislation, such as higher education institution, research institute, or centre.

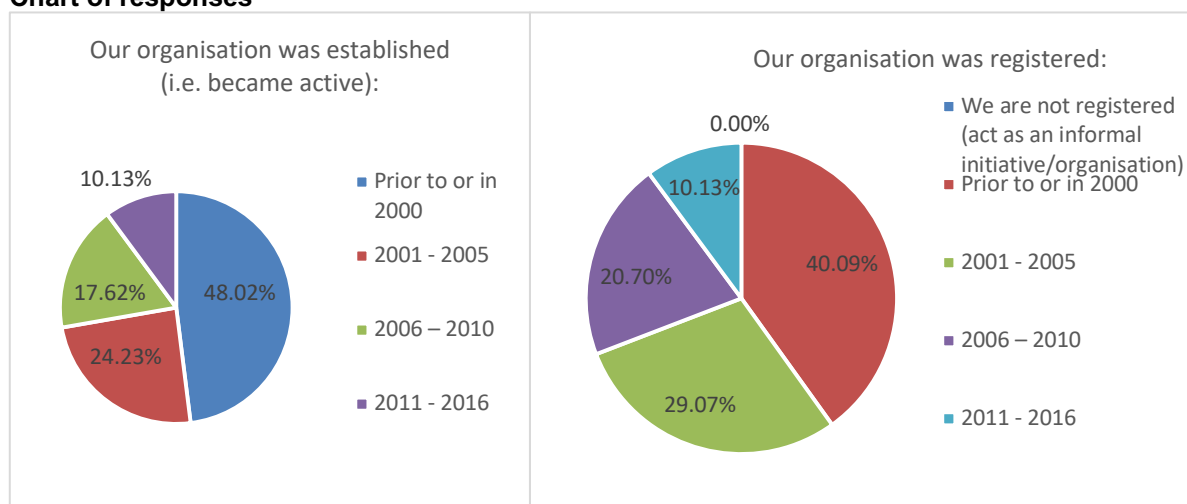
▪ Question 4 & 5

Count and percentage of responses

Our organisation was established (i.e. became active):		
	Count	Percentage
Prior to or in 2000	109	48.02%
2001 - 2005	55	24.23%
2006 – 2010	40	17.62%
2011 - 2016	23	10.13%

Our organisation was registered:		
	Count	Percentage
We are not registered (act as an informal initiative/organisation)	0	0.00%
Prior to or in 2000	91	40.09%
2001 - 2005	66	29.07%
2006 – 2010	47	20.70%
2011 - 2016	23	10.13%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

Almost half of CSF beneficiary CSOs are established organisations, active since before the 2000s (109 or 48%). What is interesting to note, however, is that only 91 or 40% were registered in the same period. In the period, 2011-2005, 55 or 24% of CSOs were established, while 66 or 29% were registered. In the following periods (2006-2010 and 2011-2016), the number of established and registered organisations is almost equal, i.e. 40 or 18% established and 47 or 21% registered (2006-2010), 23 or 10% established and 23 or 20% registered (2011-2016), respectively.

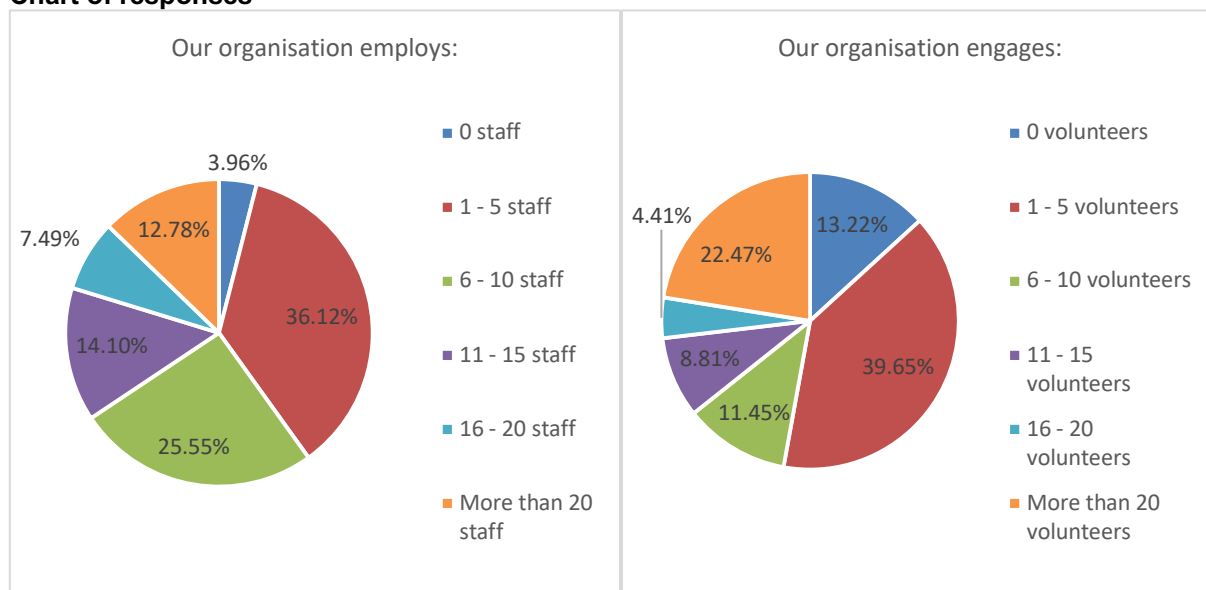
▪ Question 6 & 7

Count and percentage of responses

Our organisation employs:		
	Count	Percentage
0 staff	9	3.96%
1 - 5 staff	82	36.12%
6 - 10 staff	58	25.55%
11 - 15 staff	32	14.10%
16 - 20 staff	17	7.49%
More than 20 staff	29	12.78%

Our organisation engages:		
	Count	Percentage
0 volunteers	30	13.22%
1 - 5 volunteers	90	39.65%
6 - 10 volunteers	26	11.45%
11 - 15 volunteers	20	8.81%
16 - 20 volunteers	10	4.41%
More than 20 volunteers	51	22.47%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

As can be expected, a majority of CSF beneficiary CSOs are organisations well equipped with human resources, both in terms of employed staff and volunteers. Twenty-nine (29) or 13% of CSOs have more than 20 staff, another 17 or 8% between 16-20 staff and another 32 or 14% who have between 11-15 staff, which can be considered large organisations. Still, a large majority (140 or 62%) of CSF beneficiaries have between 1 to 10 staff and can be considered small to middle-sized organisations. There were also 9 (or 4%) of organisations who reported not having any employed staff.

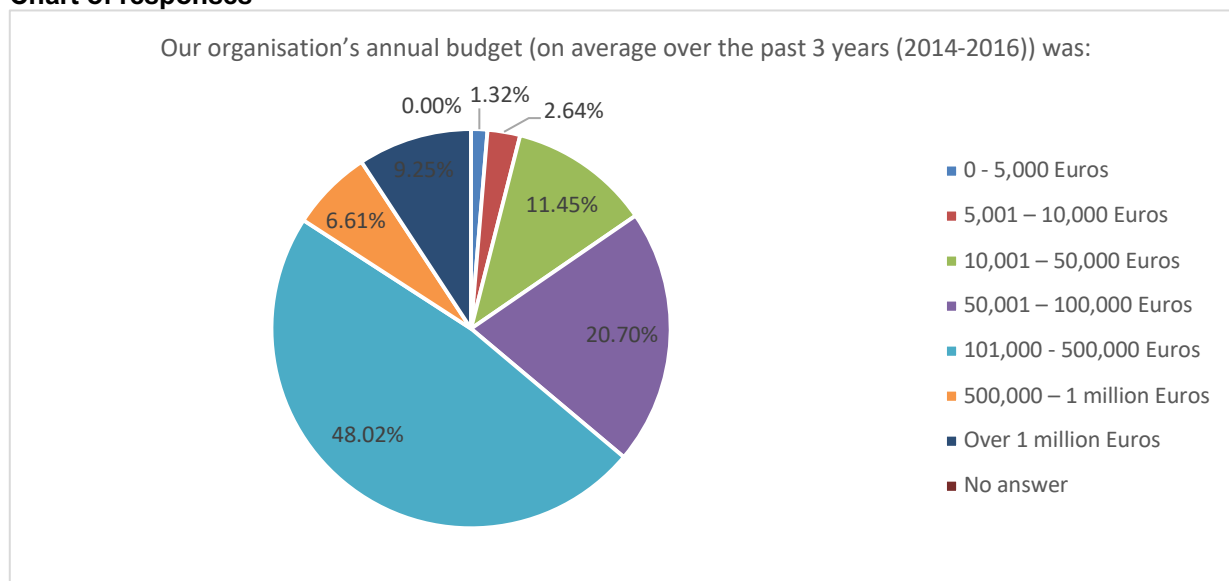
It is encouraging to see that the large majority of organisations engage volunteers, i.e. there were only 30 or 13% who stated not engaging any volunteers. Ninety (90) or 40% stated engaging 1-5 volunteers, 26 or 12% stated they engage 6-10 volunteers, 20 or 9% engage 11-15 volunteers, 10 or 4% engage 16-20 volunteers, while 51 or 23% organisation stated of engaging over 20 volunteers.

▪ Question 8

Count and percentage of responses

Our organisation's annual budget (on average over the past 3 years (2014-2016)) was:		
	Count	Percentage
0 - 5,000 Euros	3	1.32%
5,001 – 10,000 Euros	6	2.64%
10,001 – 50,000 Euros	26	11.45%
50,001 – 100,000 Euros	47	20.70%
101,000 - 500,000 Euros	109	48.02%
500,000 – 1 million Euros	15	6.61%
Over 1 million Euros	21	9.25%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

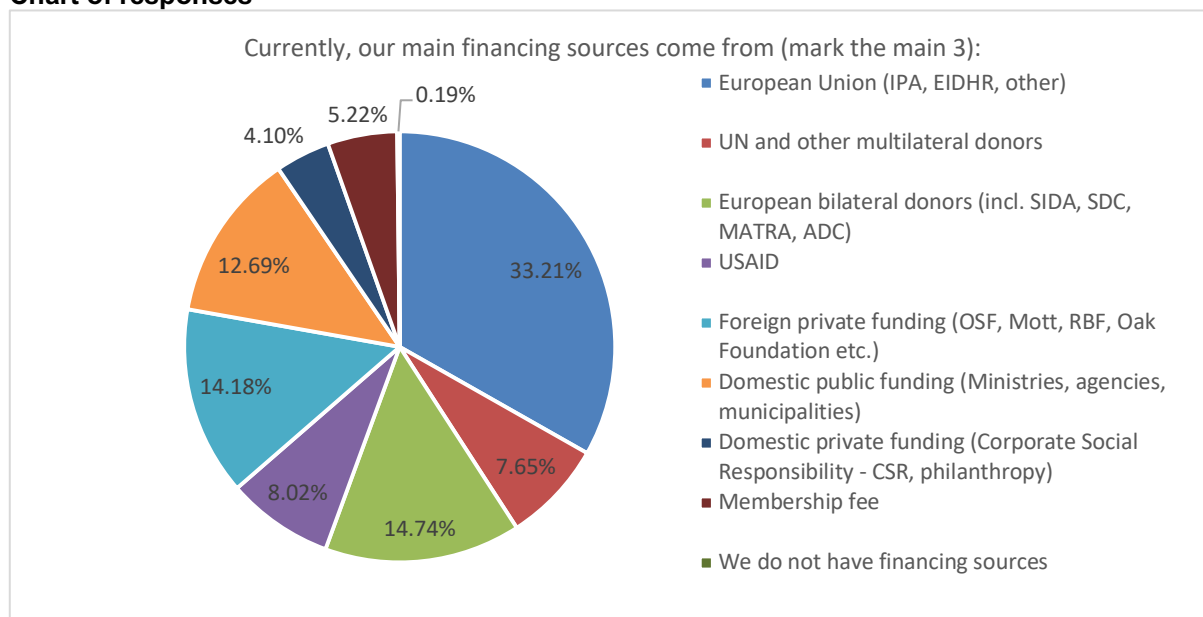
The majority of CSO respondents (109 or 48%) have an average organisational budget of 101,000-500,000 million EUR. Forty-seven (47) or 21% have a budget of 50,001-100,000 EUR, while 26 or 12% have a budget between 5,001-10,000 EUR. CSF beneficiary respondents also included organisations with considerable budgets, i.e. 15 or 7% between 500,000-1 mil EUR, while there were also 21 or 9% of those with a budget of over 1 million EUR.

▪ Question 9

Count and percentage of responses

Currently, our main financing sources come from (mark the main 3):		
	Count	Percentage
European Union (IPA, EIDHR, other)	178	33.21%
UN and other multilateral donors	41	7.65%
European bilateral donors (incl. SIDA, SDC, MATRA, ADA)	79	14.74%
USAID	43	8.02%
Foreign private funding (OSF, Mott, RBF, Oak Foundation etc.)	76	14.18%
Domestic public funding (Ministries, agencies, municipalities)	68	12.69%
Domestic private funding (Corporate Social Responsibility - CSR, philanthropy)	22	4.10%
Membership fee	28	5.22%
We do not have financing sources	1	0.19%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

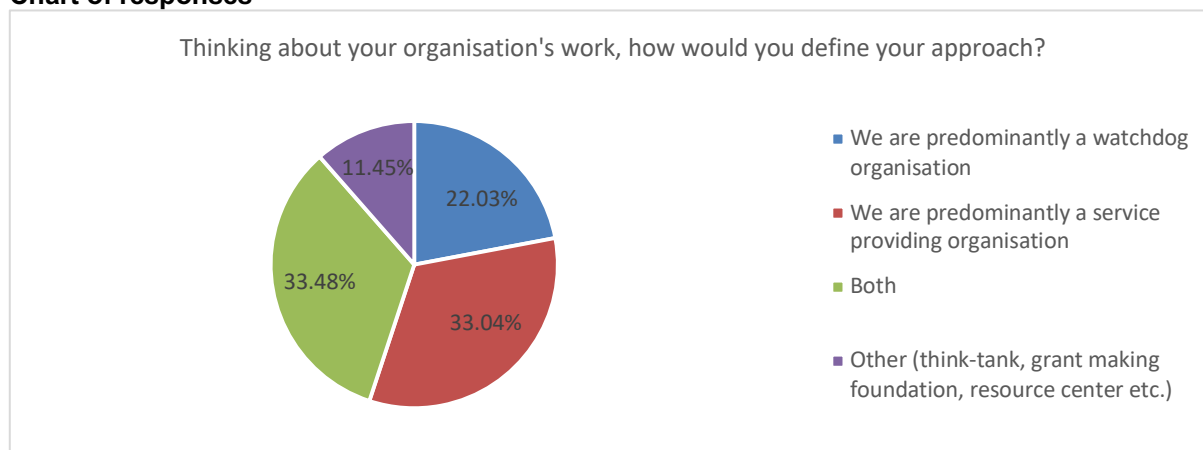
Foreign funding (54%) makes up the main source of financing of CSO respondents, of which the largest share is from the EU (178 or 33%), European bilateral donors (incl. SIDA, SDC, MATRA, ADA) - 43 or 8% and private donors (OSF, Mott, RBT, Oak Foundation etc.) - 76 or 14%. Domestic funding is present, but to a much lesser extent, i.e. public funding (Ministries, municipalities) is a funding source for only 68 or 13% of respondents, while domestic private funding is a source for 22 or 4% of CSOs. Among CSOs beneficiaries are also organisations (28 or 5%), whose funding comes from membership fees.

Question 10

Count and percentage of responses

Thinking about your organisation's work, how would you define your approach?		
	Count	Percentage
We are predominantly a watchdog organisation	50	22.03%
We are predominantly a service providing organisation	75	33.04%
Both	76	33.48%
Other (think-tank, grant making foundation, resource centre etc.)	26	11.45%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

Many organisations combine methods of their work from providing service to their members and target groups (e.g. women, children, minorities, disabled) to watchdog activities (e.g. monitoring and advocacy for change of policy, laws). The main focus of the CSF has been on supporting monitoring and advocacy on sector or thematic issues, so it is interesting to observe that CSO CSF respondents have equally identified themselves with different methods of work, i.e. Fifty (50) or 22% have stated that they are predominantly a watchdog organisation, while 75 or 33% have stated they are predominately a service providing organisation. However, there were many (76 or 34%) that stated they use both approaches, while another 36 or 12% stated they use Other methods/approaches in their work (think-tank, grant making foundation, resource centre etc.).

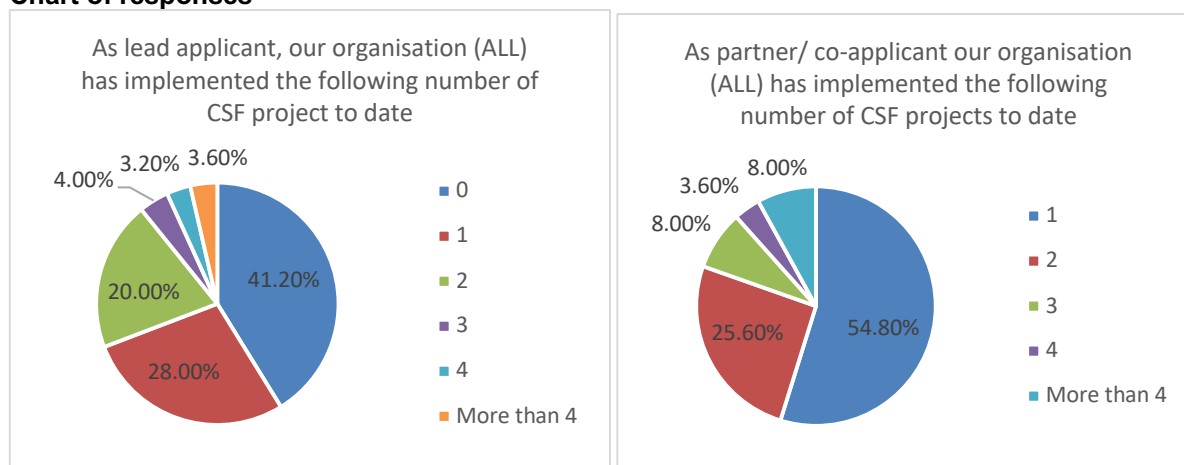
▪ **Question 11 & 12**

Count and percentage of responses

As lead applicant, our organisation (ALL) has implemented the following number of CSF projects to date		
	Count	Percentage
0	103	41.20%
1	70	28.00%
2	50	20.00%
3	10	4.00%
4	8	3.20%
More than 4	9	3.60%

As partner/ co-applicant our organisation (ALL) has implemented the following number of CSF projects to date		
	Count	Percentage
1	137	54.80%
2	64	25.60%
3	20	8.00%
4	9	3.60%
More than 4	20	8.00%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

Most (103 or 41%) CSF beneficiaries have not previously implemented any CSF projects, while 70 or 28% stated they have implemented 1 previous project from CSF. There were several who have implemented 2 (50 or 20%), 3 (10 or 40%), 4 (8 or 3%) projects, while there were also 9 (or 4%) organisations stating they have implemented more than 4 projects from the CSF.

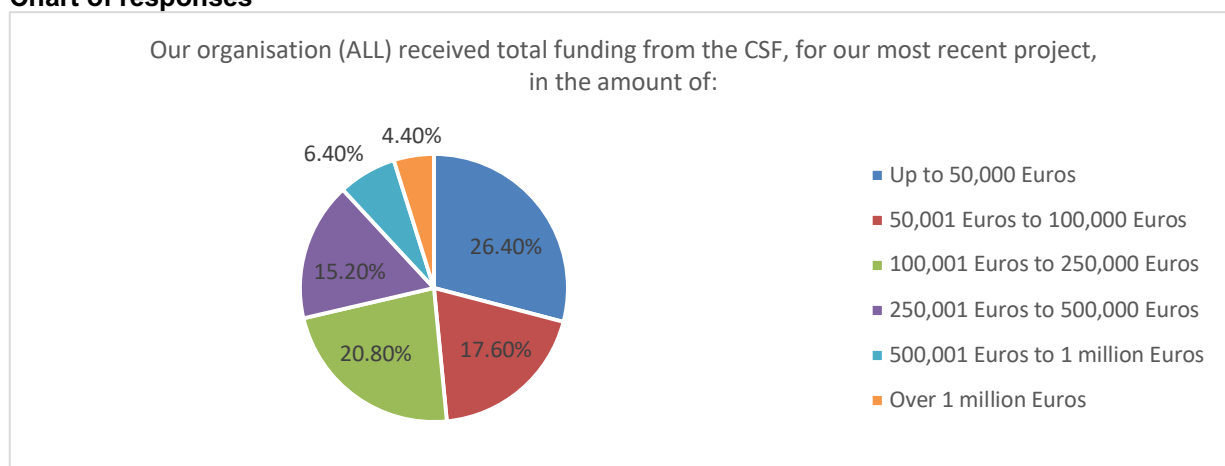
When it comes to partnership, many more organisations stated being partner in one (137 or 55%) or more projects. Sixty-two (62) or 26% stated being in 2 projects, 20 or 8% in 3 and 9 or 4% in 4. There were also 20 (or 8%) organisations that stated that they were partners in more than 4 projects.

▪ **Question 13**

Count and percentage of responses

Our organisation (ALL) received total funding from the CSF, for our most recent project, in the amount of:		
	Count	Percentage
Up to 50,000 Euros	66	26.40%
50,001 Euros to 100,000 Euros	44	17.60%
100,001 Euros to 250,000 Euros	52	20.80%
250,001 Euros to 500,000 Euros	38	15.20%
500,001 Euros to 1 million Euros	16	6.40%
Over 1 million Euros	11	4.40%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

The majority of funding that beneficiaries have received from the CSF is substantial, i.e. approximates the average annual budget reported by CSF respondents (see also question 9)⁸⁷. There are 11 (or 4%) who reported receiving funding of over 1 million EUR, 16 or 6% received between 500,001-1 million EUR, while 38 (15%) reported to receive between 250,001-500,000 EUR. The biggest proportion of respondents reported receiving either between 100,001-250,000 EUR (52 or 21%), 50,001-100,000 EUR (44 or 18%), while there were 66 (Or 26%) organisations reported having received up to 50,000 EUR.

▪ **Question 14**

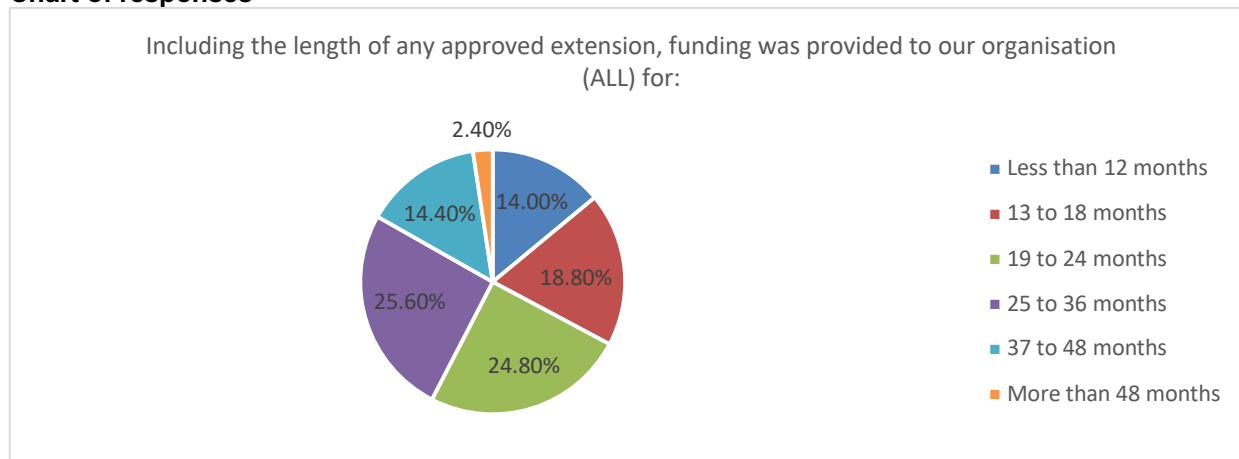
Count and percentage of responses

Including the length of any approved extension, funding was provided to our organisation (ALL) for:		
	Count	Percentage
Less than 12 months	35	14.00%
13 to 18 months	47	18.80%

⁸⁷ Still, it should be noted that CSF project grants are largely for multi-year funding. Thus, this does not imply that respondent organisation budgets are solely based on CSF funding, but rather that CSF is an important funding sources for these organisations.

19 to 24 months	62	24.80%
25 to 36 months	64	25.60%
37 to 48 months	36	14.40%
More than 48 months	6	2.40%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

The majority of CSF beneficiary respondents have implemented long(er) term projects. Hundred and six (106) or 42% organisations reported implementing projects of duration over 2 years (24 months) and more, while only 35 or 14% reported implementing projects for less than 1 year (12 months).

▪ **Question 15**

Count and percentage of responses

Our organisation (ALL) first received funding for our project from the CSF in:		
	Count	Percentage
2012	87	34.80%
2013	41	16.40%
2014	37	14.80%
2015	30	12.00%
2016	51	20.40%

Analysis of responses

Eighty-seven (87) or 35% of respondents have received their first funding from the CSF in the initial evaluation period, i.e. 2012. Another 41 or 16% received support in 2013 and 37 or 15% in 2014. Thirty (30) or 12% received the funding in 2015, while 51 or 20% have received it in the last year, i.e. 2016.

▪ **Question 16**

Count and percentage of responses

Our (ALL) last project is:		
	Count	Percentage
On-going (still running after 1st January, 2017)	157	62.80%
Completed (closed on/ before 31st December, 2016)	93	37.20%

Analysis of responses

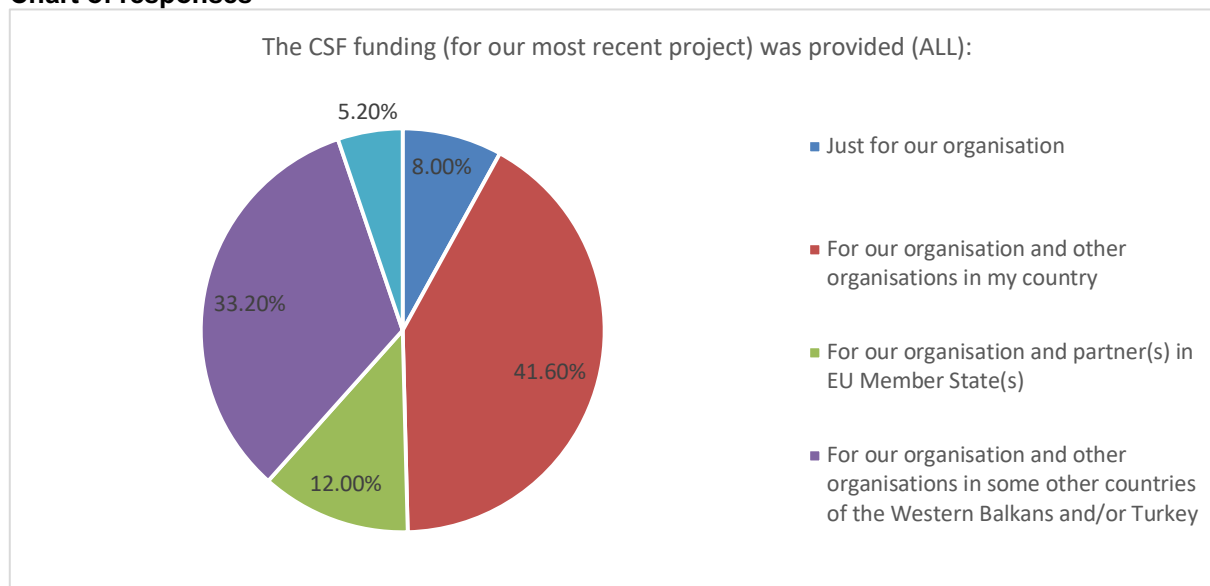
The majority of respondents (157 or 63%) are currently implementing a project within the CSF, while 93 or 37% reported that their last project has been closed before or end of 2016.

▪ **Question 17**

Count and percentage of responses

The CSF funding (for our most recent project) was provided (ALL):		
	Count	Percentage
Just for our organisation	20	8.00%
For our organisation and other organisations in my country	104	41.60%
For our organisation and partner(s) in EU Member State(s)	30	12.00%
For our organisation and other organisations in some other countries of the Western Balkans and/or Turkey	83	33.20%
For our organisation and at least one organisation in all countries of the Western Balkans as well as Turkey	13	5.20%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

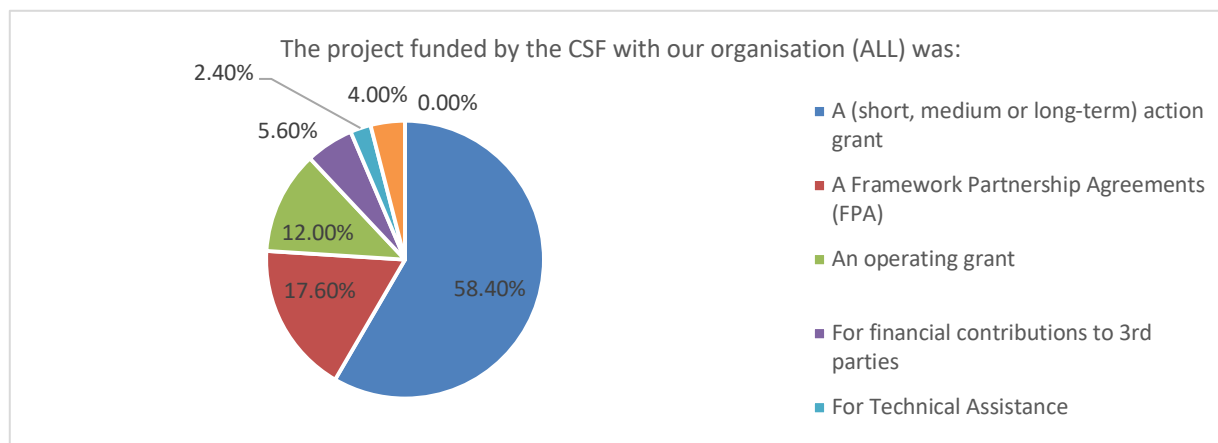
The CSF has largely been focused on supporting partnerships and networking and this is also reflected in the structure of the survey respondents. The form of partnership (geographically) has ranged from supporting networking between CSOs in the country (104 or 42%), networking with CSOs in other WBT countries (96 or 38%) or with EU MS partners (30 or 12%). There were only 20 (or 8%) respondents that reported that support was just for their organisation.

▪ **Question 18**

Count and percentage of responses

The project funded by the CSF with our organisation (ALL) was:		
	Count	Percentage
A (short, medium or long-term) action grant	146	58.40%
A Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA)	44	17.60%
An operating grant	30	12.00%
For financial contributions to 3rd parties	14	5.60%
For Technical Assistance	6	2.40%
Other	10	4.00%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

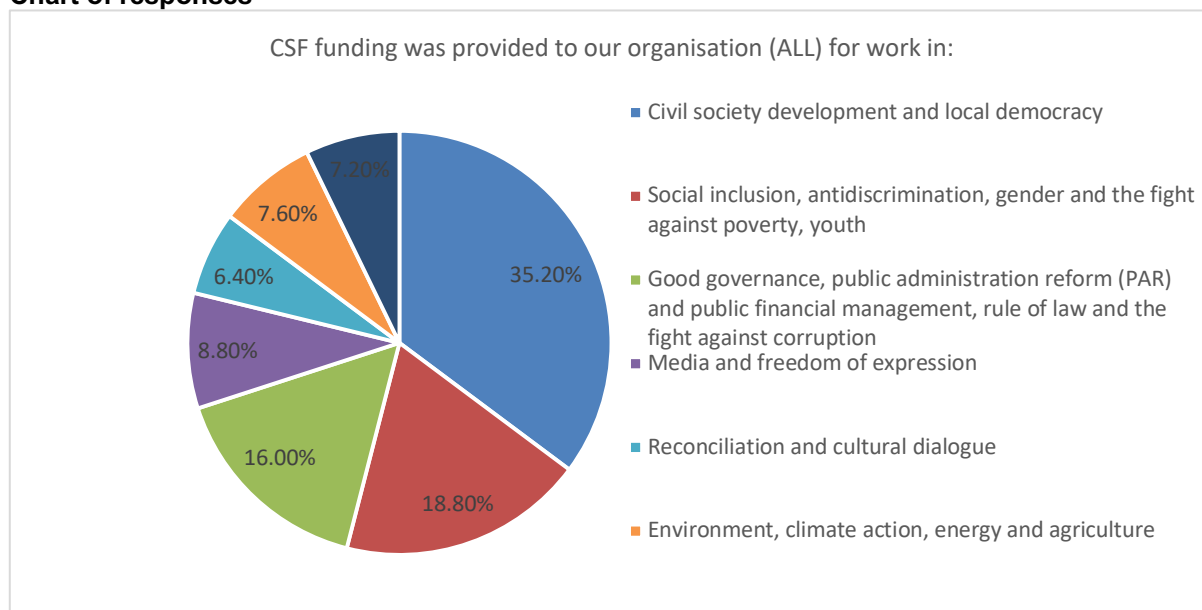
The majority of respondents have implemented projects under a range of action grant instruments (short, medium or long-term), i.e. 146 or 58% of respondents. A further 44 or 18% have implemented a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) and 30 or 12% an operation grant. There were 14 or 6% of respondents who have implemented a support as financial contribution, while 6 or 2% have participated to implementation of a TA project.

▪ **Question 19**

Count and percentage of responses

CSF funding was provided to our organisation (ALL) for work in:		
	Count	Percentage
Civil society development and local democracy	88	35.20%
Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth	47	18.80%
Good governance, public administration reform (PAR) and public financial management, rule of law and the fight against corruption	40	16.00%
Media and freedom of expression	22	8.80%
Reconciliation and cultural dialogue	16	6.40%
Environment, climate action, energy and agriculture	19	7.60%
Other	18	7.20%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

Similarly, as per the CSF portfolio, most respondents (88 or 35%) reported implementing CSF assistance in “civil society development and local democracy” sector, while 47 or 19% in “social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth” sector and 40 or 16% in “good governance, public administration reform (PAR) and public financial management, rule of law and the fight against corruption” sector. Other sectors were covered almost equally, i.e. 22 or 9% received support for work in “media and freedom of expression” sector, 16 or 6% in “reconciliation and cultural dialogue” sector and 19 or 8% in “environment, climate action, energy and agriculture” sector. There were also 18 or 7% of organisations, who stated that support for CSF was focused on Other issues.

○ **Quantitative Commentary/ Feedback on the CSF**

Responses to the survey were, on the whole, very positive in their analysis of all aspects of the CSF. The following summarises these responses, according to the categories of the survey.

Relevance – There is a clear and stated alignment between CSF objectives and CSO priorities, although there are indicators of a not insignificant area of CSO work that falls outside of CSF priorities. The relevance of the CSF in the context of EU accession priorities and processes is noted, as is the relevance to the development of civil society per se.

Efficiency – While there is a general view that the EU coordinates well with other, key donors, responses are also indicative of further work being required in this area. It is noted however that the issue may be in actual coordination processes or in the communication of the activities and outcomes of existing processes. Responses are supportive of the attempts by the EU to achieve a better reach from CSF funding – the effort is visible in responses, but there is a not-insignificant level of response that would indicate still more focus is required here. Both DG NEAR and EUDs are deemed by respondents to be flexible and responsive in their work with organisations.

Effectiveness – Funded organisations provide consistent indication that the CSF is being effective in achieving its aims and objectives. Respondents note the change in approaches being initiated by the EU to improve results, with support to networking, advocacy and sub-granting all receiving strong support as approaches that are contributing to effectiveness. There is a wide diversity of opinions on the effectiveness of CSF support to the building of organisational capacity, with no real trend in provided responses.

Impact – Having said this, where there has been a contribution to development of CSO capacity, it is notably in the strategic orientation of organisations and in internal management capacities, which is contributing to lasting change.

Sustainability – Generally speaking responses to CSF contributions are positive, but there is a significant group of respondents with more restrained support (fully 50% of respondents range from only somewhat support to negative, a clear indicator of an area where further work is needed).

Cross-cutting themes – Generally speaking there is good, consistent support for the quality of approach and focus on human rights, gender equality and the environment.

The following section provides the detailed responses to the quantitative questions from the survey found in the survey section titled *Feedback on the CSF*.

▪ **Relevance**

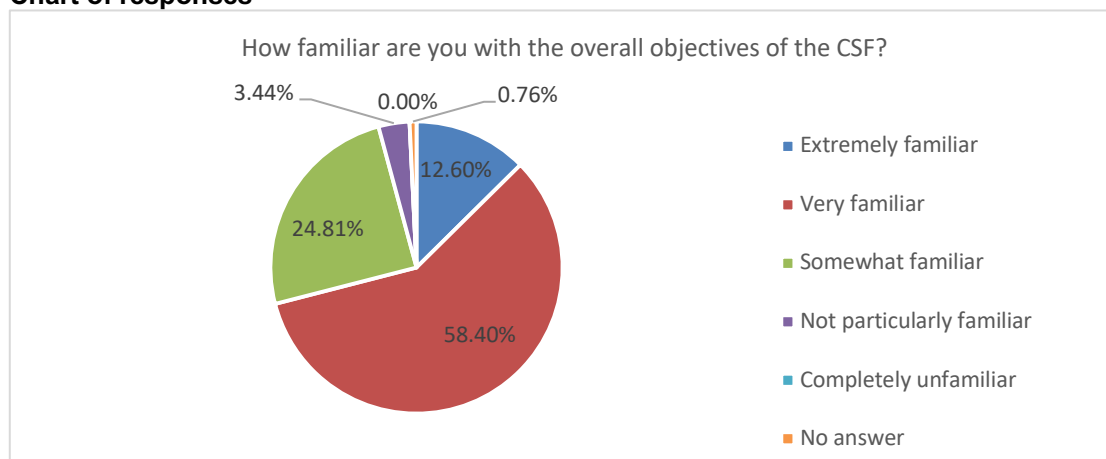
The first set of questions addresses the relevance of the CSF, i.e., the extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor.

▪ **Question 1**

Count and percentage of responses

How familiar are you with the overall objectives of the CSF?		
	Count	Percentage
5 – Extremely familiar	33	12.60%
4 – Very familiar	153	58.40%
3 – Somewhat familiar (A4)	65	24.81%
2 - Not particularly familiar	9	3.44%
1 - Completely unfamiliar	0	0.00%
No answer	2	0.76%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

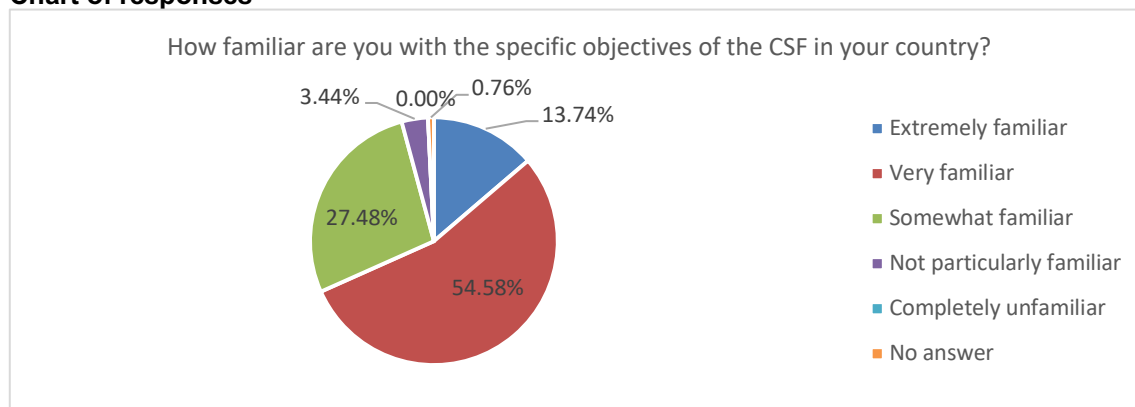
The vast majority of respondents have at least some familiarity with the overall objectives of the CSF, and indeed, 71% describe themselves as being either very familiar or extremely familiar with the CSF's overall objectives. This is significant in that it is indicative that applicants for grants do not just consider that objectives and focus of a particular Call for Proposals, but maintain an interest and awareness in the wider Programme.

Question 2

Count and percentage of responses

How familiar are you with the specific objectives of the CSF in your country?		
	Count	Percentage
Extremely familiar (A1)	36	13.74%
Very familiar (A2)	143	54.58%
Somewhat familiar (A3)	72	27.48%
Not particularly familiar (A4)	9	3.44%
Completely unfamiliar (A5)	0	0.00%
No answer	2	0.76%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

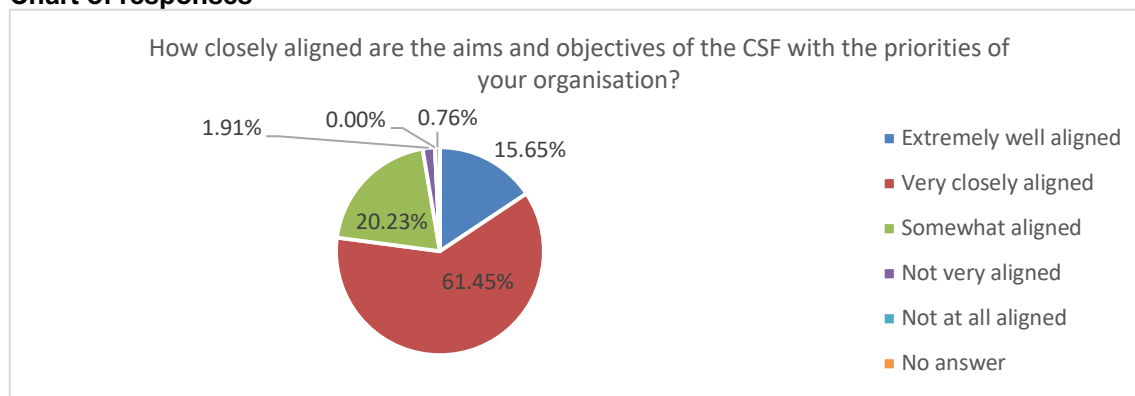
Answers here are very similar to responses to the above question on overall CSF objectives, and also indicate a high level of interest and awareness of CSF objectives, nationally.

▪ **Question 3**

Count and percentage of responses

How closely aligned are the aims and objectives of the CSF with the priorities of your organisation?		
	Count	Percentage
5-Extremely well aligned	41	15.65%
4-Very closely aligned	161	61.45%
3-Somewhat aligned	53	20.23%
2-Not very aligned	5	1.91%
1-Not at all aligned	0	0.00%
No answer	2	0.76%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

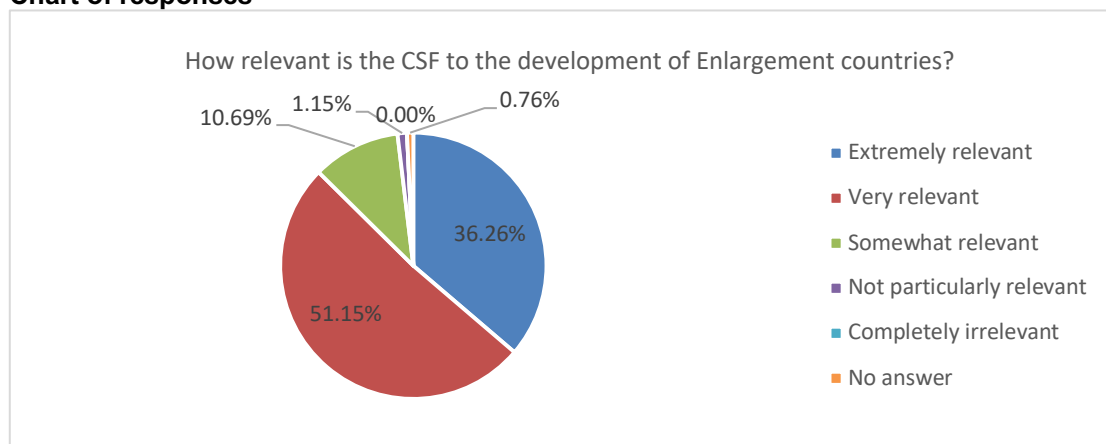
There are two aspects of the responses to this question that are of particular importance. One, the strong indications of a close alignment with the CSF’s objectives with CSO priorities and two, the relatively high response rate (20.23%) of respondents who see priorities as ‘somewhat aligned’. While still a positive response to the question of alignment, it also indicates that there are areas and aspects of CSO work and objectives that are outside of the range of CSF framework. While there are other EU Programmes (e.g. EIDHR, IPA CBC) that CSOs in the Western Balkans and Turkey benefit from, this issue might need to be further explored to see potentially if further adjustment of CSF objectives and aims is needed for the remaining duration of the Programme.

▪ **Question 4**

Count and percentage of responses

How relevant is the CSF to the development of Enlargement countries?		
	Count	Percentage
5-Extremely relevant	95	36.26%
4-Very relevant	134	51.15%
3-Somewhat relevant	28	10.69%
2-Not particularly relevant	3	1.15%
1-Completely irrelevant	0	0.00%
No answer	2	0.76%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

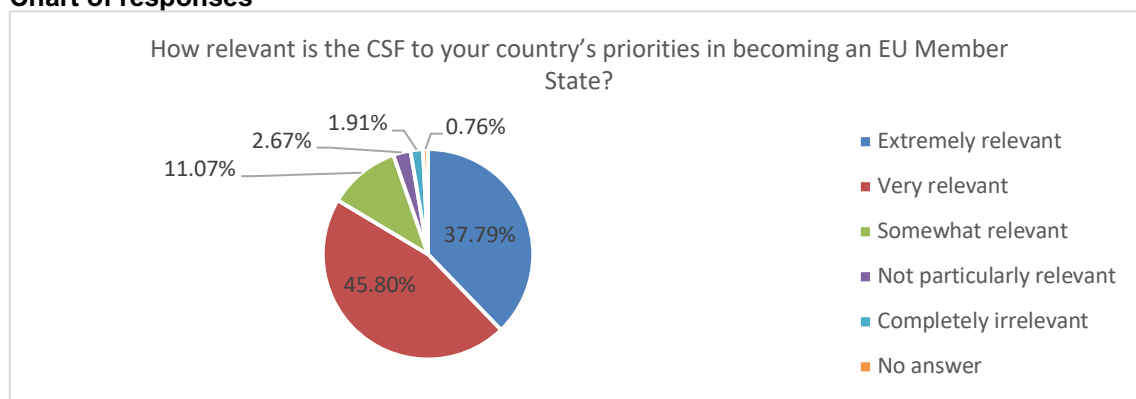
Responses indicate a very strong relevance, from the perspective of CSOs, in the work and priorities of the CSF to the overall development of Enlargement countries.

▪ **Question 5**

Count and percentage of responses

How relevant is the CSF to your country's priorities in becoming an EU Member State?		
	Count	Percentage
5-Extremely relevant	99	37.79%
4-Very relevant	120	45.80%
3-Somewhat relevant	29	11.07%
2-Not particularly relevant	7	2.67%
1-Completely irrelevant	5	1.91%
No answer	2	0.76%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

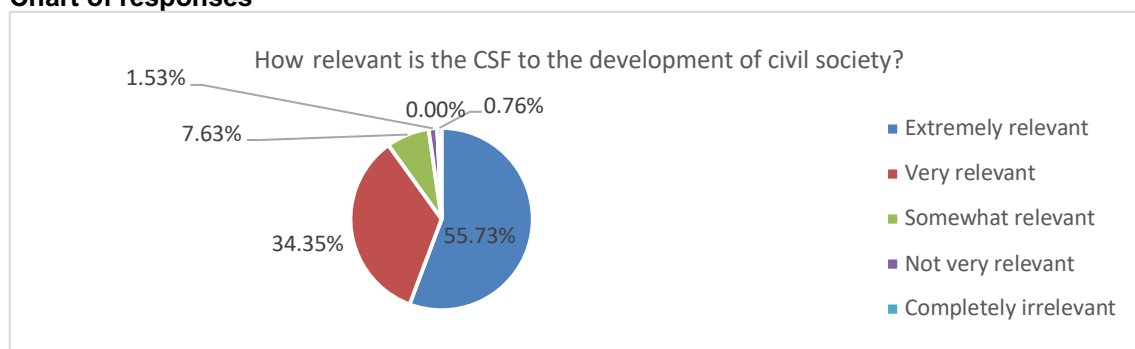
Responses indicate a very strong relevance, from the perspective of CSOs, in the work and priorities of the CSF to EU accession priorities in beneficiary countries.

▪ **Question 6**

Count and percentage of responses

How relevant is the CSF to the development of civil society?		
	Count	Percentage
5-Extremely relevant	146	55.73%
4-Very relevant	90	34.35%
3-Somewhat relevant	20	7.63%
2-Not very relevant	4	1.53%
1-Completely irrelevant	0	0.00%
No answer	2	0.76%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

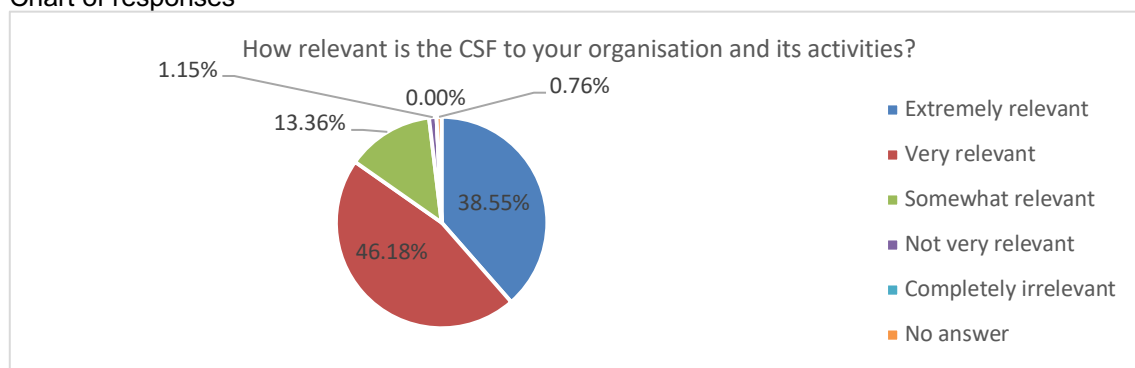
Responses to the relevance of the CSF to civil society development strongly indicated the relevance of the CSF in this area.

▪ **Question 7**

Count and percentage of responses

How relevant is the CSF to your organisation and its activities?		
	Count	Percentage
5-Extremely relevant	101	38.55%
4-Very relevant	121	46.18%
3-Somewhat relevant	35	13.36%
2-Not very relevant	3	1.15%
1-Completely irrelevant	0	0.00%
No answer	2	0.76%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

Responses to the relevance of the CSF to civil society organisational activities strongly indicated the relevance of the CSF in this area.

- Efficiency

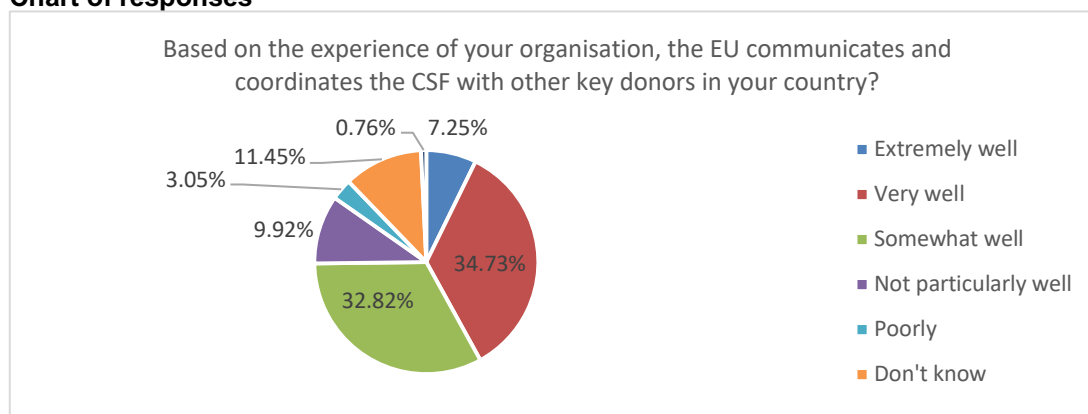
This set of questions addresses aspects of the efficiency of CSF operations and approaches.

- **Question 8**

Count and percentage of responses

Based on the experience of your organisation, the EU communicates and coordinates the CSF with other key donors in your country?		
	Count	Percentage
5-Extremely well	19	7.25%
4-Very well	91	34.73%
3-Somewhat well	86	32.82%
2-Not particularly well	26	9.92%
1-Poorly	8	3.05%
0-Don't know	30	11.45%
No answer	2	0.76%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

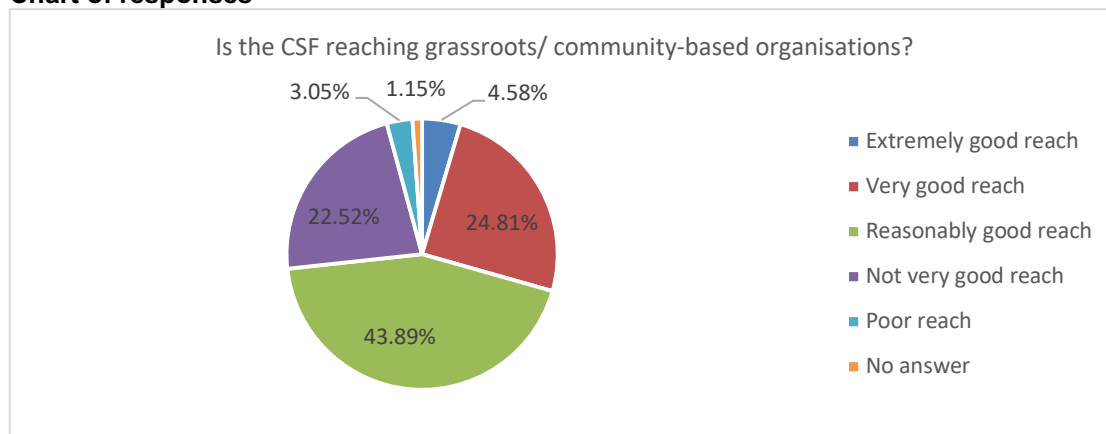
Generally speaking, respondents are of the view that the EU coordinates the CSF well with other, key donors. However, the responses indicate a) less strength of view that the cooperation is well-coordinated than the strength of all responses to questions of relevance and b) there is a solid percentage of responses that are either relatively negative or who do not know. The full range of responses is indicative of a greater required focus here, either in the actual coordination efforts or in the communication of the fact and outcomes of actual communication efforts.

- **Question 9**

Count and percentage of responses

Is the CSF reaching grassroots/ community-based organisations?		
	Count	Percentage
5-Extremely good reach	12	4.58%
4-Very good reach	65	24.81%
3-Reasonably good reach	115	43.89%
2-Not very good reach	59	22.52%
1-Poor reach	8	3.05%
No answer	3	1.15%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

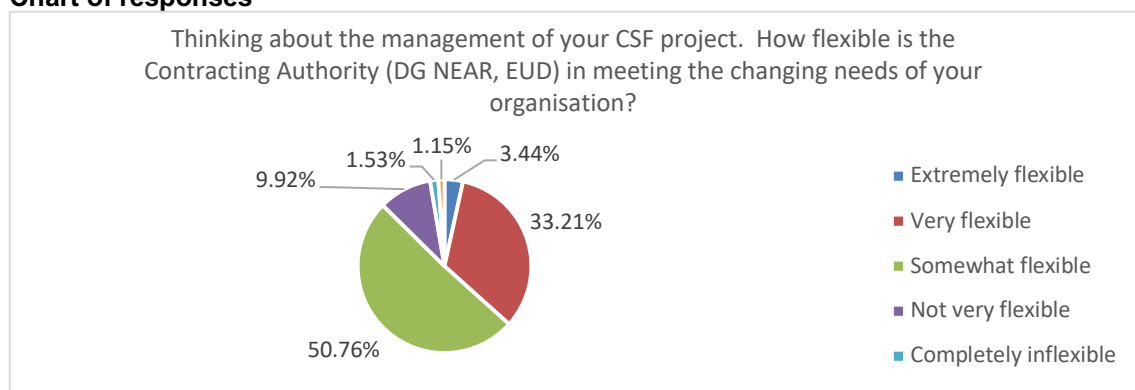
The EU understands the need for greater reach, and has implemented a number of strategies aimed at achieving this greater reach. While there is no baseline for this question, responses do indicate that this attempt at greater reach is being relatively successful. There is however a not insignificant proportion of respondents whose view is clearly that more work is required to achieve desired outcomes in this area.

Question 10

Count and percentage of responses

Thinking about the management of your CSF project. How flexible is the Contracting Authority (DG NEAR, EUD) in meeting the changing needs of your organisation?		
	Count	Percentage
5-Extremely flexible	9	3.44%
4-Very flexible	87	33.21%
3-Somewhat flexible	133	50.76%
2-Not very flexible	26	9.92%
1-Completely inflexible	4	1.53%
No answer	3	1.15%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

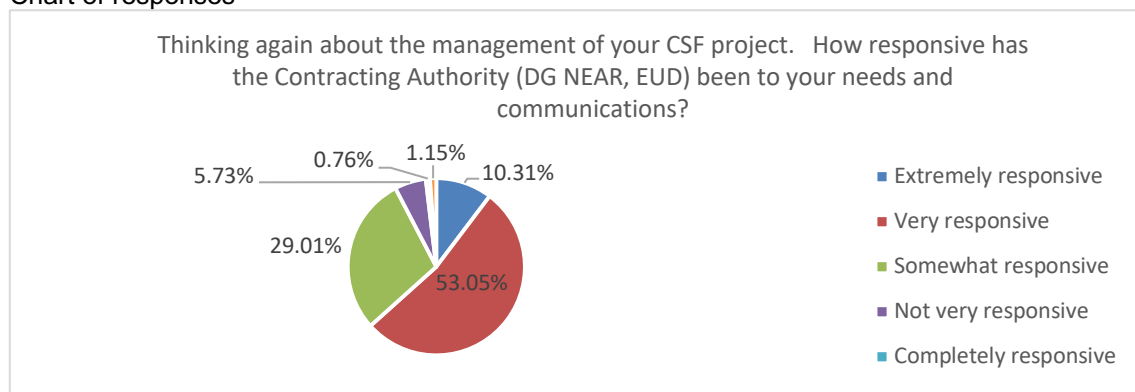
Responses indicate a relatively high level of support for flexibility in Contracting Authorities, including fully one-third of respondents who view either DG NEAR or their EUD as very flexible.

Question 11

Count and percentage of responses

Thinking again about the management of your CSF project. How responsive has the Contracting Authority (DG NEAR, EUD) been to your needs and communications?		
	Count	Percentage
5-Extremely responsive	27	10.31%
4-Very responsive	139	53.05%
3-Somewhat responsive	76	29.01%
2-Not very responsive	15	5.73%
1-Completely irresponsible	2	0.76%
No answer	3	1.15%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

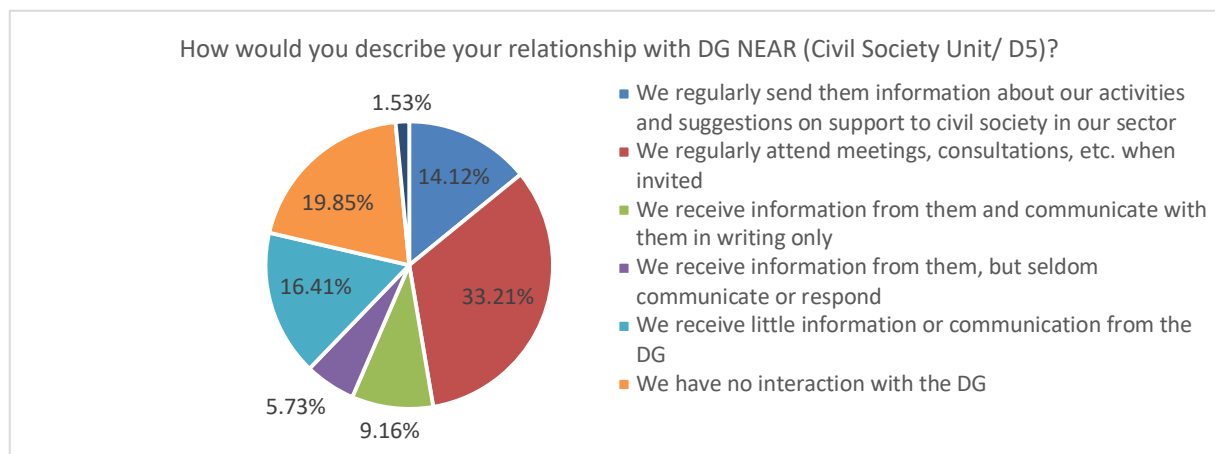
CSO support for the *responsiveness* of Contracting Authorities is very strong. Over 63% of respondents describe DG NEAR or their EUD as either very or extremely responsive to their needs and communications, with a further 29% describing Contracting Authorities as somewhat responsive – a total of 92% positive responses.

▪ **Question 12**

Count and percentage of responses

How would you describe your relationship with DG NEAR (Civil Society Unit/ D5)?		
	Count	Percentage
We regularly send them information about our activities and suggestions on support to civil society in our sector.	37	14.12%
We regularly attend meetings, consultations, etc. when invited.	87	33.21%
We receive information from them and communicate with them in writing only.	24	9.16%
We receive information from them, but seldom communicate or respond.	15	5.73%
We receive little information or communication from the DG.	43	16.41%
We have no interaction with the DG.	52	19.85%
No answer	4	1.53%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

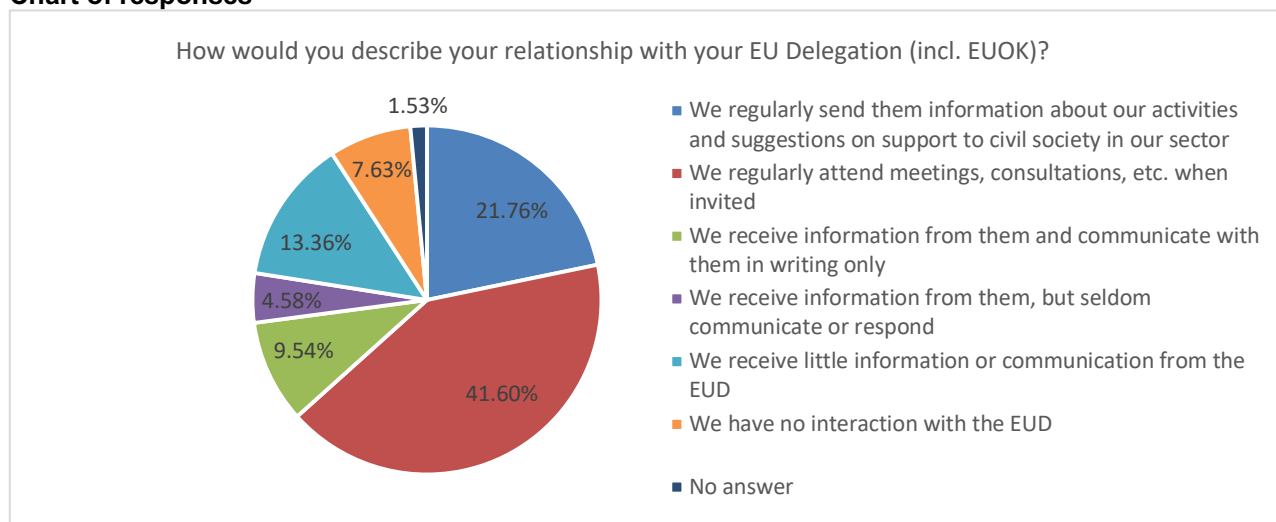
There is mixed range of interactions between respondents and DG NEAR (Civil Society Unit/ D5). While 57% are either proactive and responsive, 22% receive information but are not responding to it. There are 20% of respondents that report no interaction with the DG. Why the survey did not provide feedback on the reasons, one contributing factor is that organizations funded via national project are mostly in contact with country EUDs.

▪ **Question 13**

Count and percentage of responses

How would you describe your relationship with your EU Delegation (incl. EUOK)?		
	Count	Percentage
We regularly send them information about our activities and suggestions on support to civil society in our sector.	57	21.76%
We regularly attend meetings, consultations, etc. when invited.	109	41.60%
We receive information from them and communicate with them in writing only.	25	9.54%
We receive information from them, but seldom communicate or respond.	12	4.58%
We receive little information or communication from the EUD.	35	13.36%
We have no interaction with the EUD.	20	7.63%
No answer	4	1.53%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

A vast majority (74%) of respondents report being either proactive or responsive in communicating with their country EUDs. But there is also 20% of respondents that have received little information or have no interaction with the EUDs.

Effectiveness

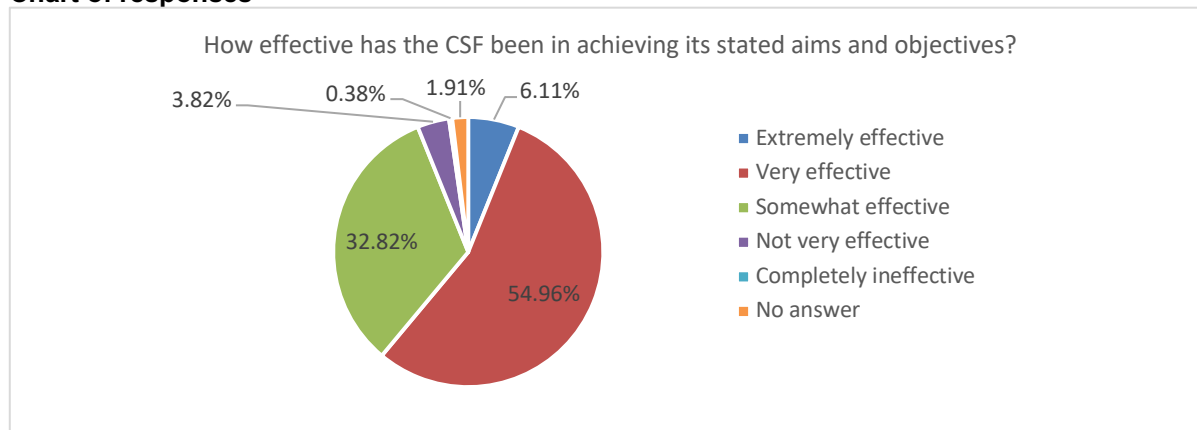
This set of questions addresses the effectiveness of the CF, i.e., the extent to which it is achieving its intended outputs and outcomes.

Question 14

Count and percentage of responses

How effective has the CSF been in achieving its stated aims and objectives?		
	Count	Percentage
5-Extremely effective	16	6.11%
4-Very effective	144	54.96%
3-Somewhat effective	86	32.82%
2-Not very effective	10	3.82%
1-Completely ineffective	1	0.38%
No answer	5	1.91%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

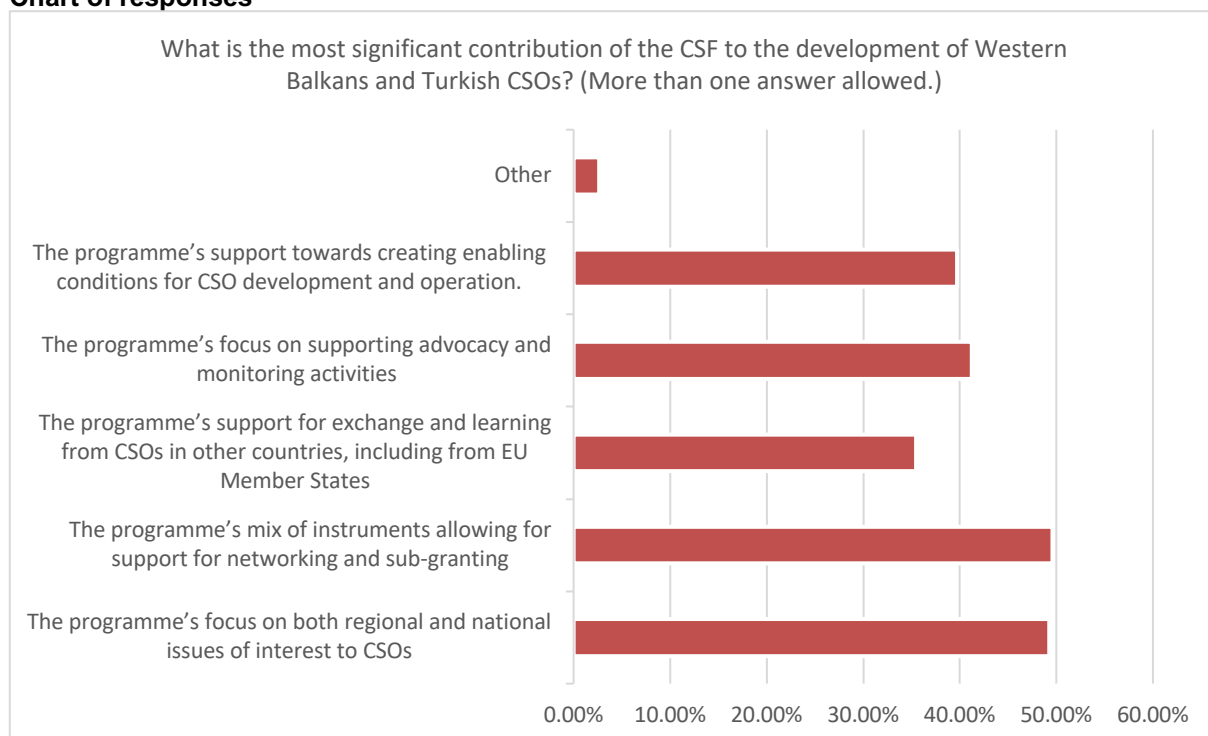
The overall level of response to this question indicates the view that the CSF is being very effective in achieving its stated aims and objectives.

▪ **Question 15**

Count and percentage of responses

What is the most significant contribution of the CSF to the development of Western Balkans and Turkish CSOs?		
	Count	Percentage
The programme's focus on both regional and national issues of interest to CSOs.	129	49.24%
The programme's mix of instruments allowing for support for networking and sub-granting.	130	49.62%
The programme's support for exchange and learning from CSOs in other countries, including from EU Member States.	93	35.50%
The programme's focus on supporting advocacy and monitoring activities.	108	41.22%
The programme's support towards creating enabling conditions for CSO development and operation.	104	39.69%
Other (Cooperation with EU and national institutions, development of alternative models, practices etc.)	7	2.67%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

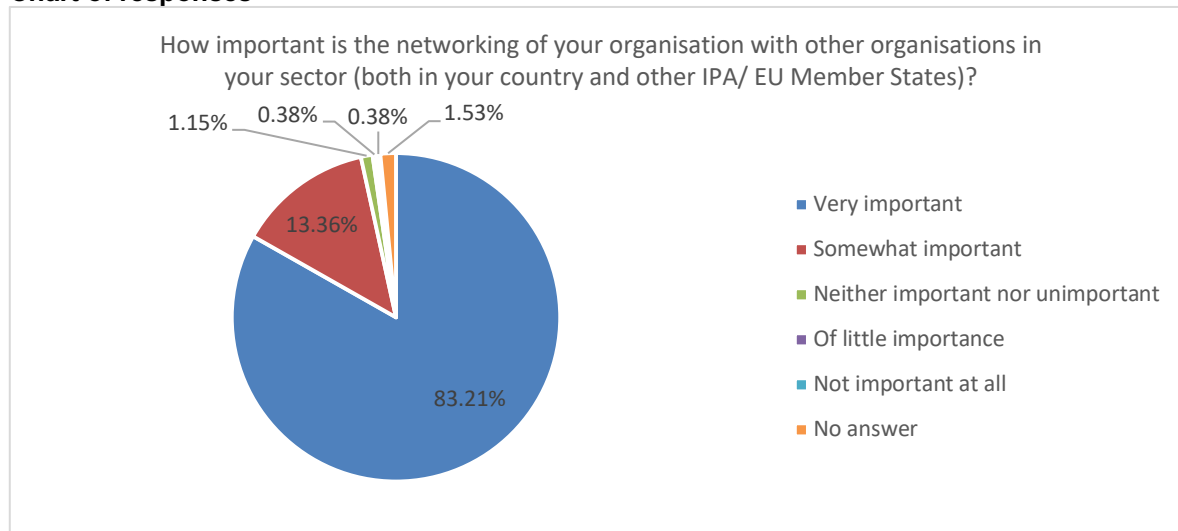
Respondents seem to appreciate the contribution of many of the new approaches that the CSF has introduced since 2011, i.e. the combination of regional and national support (50%), support to networking and sub-granting (49%), monitoring and advocacy (41%), support to enabling environment (40%) and exchange and learning between different country CSOs (36%). Among other contributions (3%) mentioned was the support to cooperation with EU and national institutions and development of alternative models and practices.

▪ **Question 16**

Count and percentage of responses

How important is the networking of your organisation with other organisations in your sector (both in your country and other IPA/ EU Member States)?		
	Count	Percentage
5-Very important	218	83.21%
4-Somewhat important	35	13.36%
3-Neither important nor unimportant	3	1.15%
2-Of little importance	1	0.38%
1-Not important at all	1	0.38%
No answer	4	1.53%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

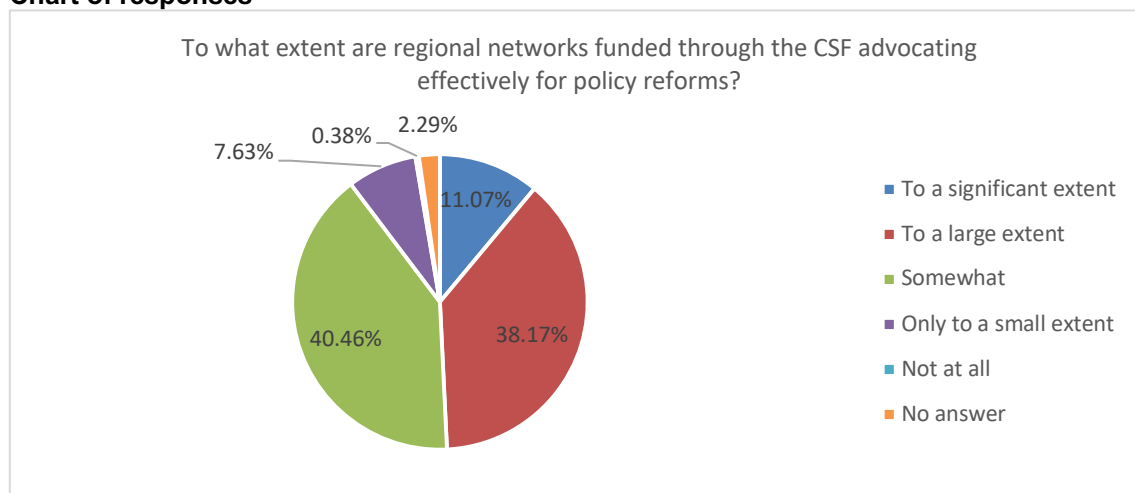
Networking is clearly an extremely important aspect of the life of funded organisations, with fully 83% noting it as very important and a further 13% saying somewhat important – a total of over 96%.

▪ **Question 17**

Count and percentage of responses

To what extent are regional networks funded through the CSF advocating effectively for policy reforms?		
	Count	Percentage
5-To a significant extent	29	11.07%
4-To a large extent	100	38.17%
3-Somewhat	106	40.46%
2-Only to a small extent	20	7.63%
1-Not at al	1	0.38%
No answer	6	2.29%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

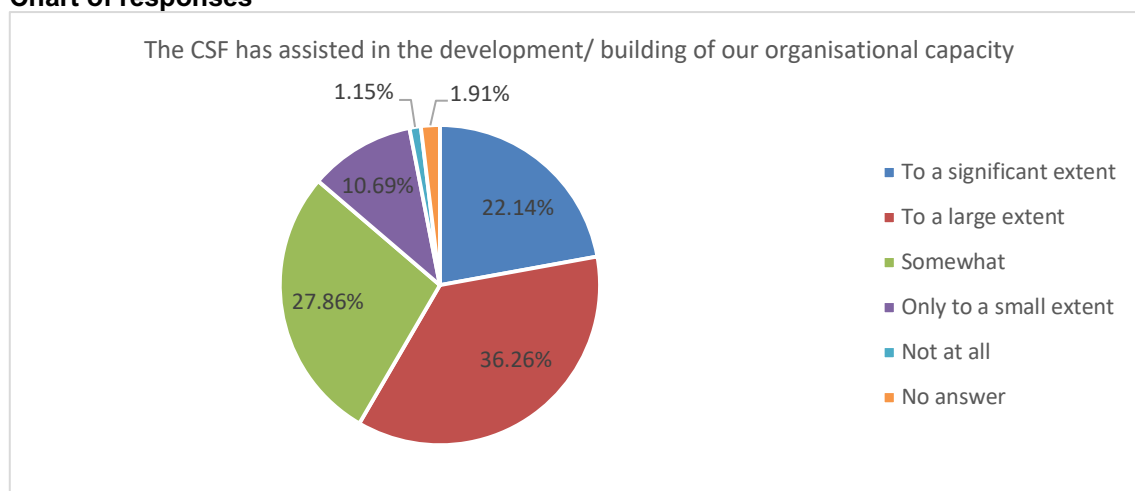
While clearly the view of organisations is that CSF funding contributes to effective advocacy for policy reforms, what is more interesting and important is the significant percentage of respondents that indicate that the funds are only somewhat effective. While still positive, this 40% of respondents clearly think that there is room for stronger results.

▪ Question 18

Count and percentage of responses

The CSF has assisted in the development/ building of our organisational capacity.		
	Count	Percentage
5-To a significant extent	58	22.14%
4-To a large extent	95	36.26%
3-Somewhat	73	27.86%
2-Only to a small extent	28	10.69%
1-Not at all	3	1.15%
No answer	5	1.91%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

Responses to this question are also very interesting in that while being generally positive as to the assistance of the CSF funding to a building of organisational capacity, there is a great diversity in

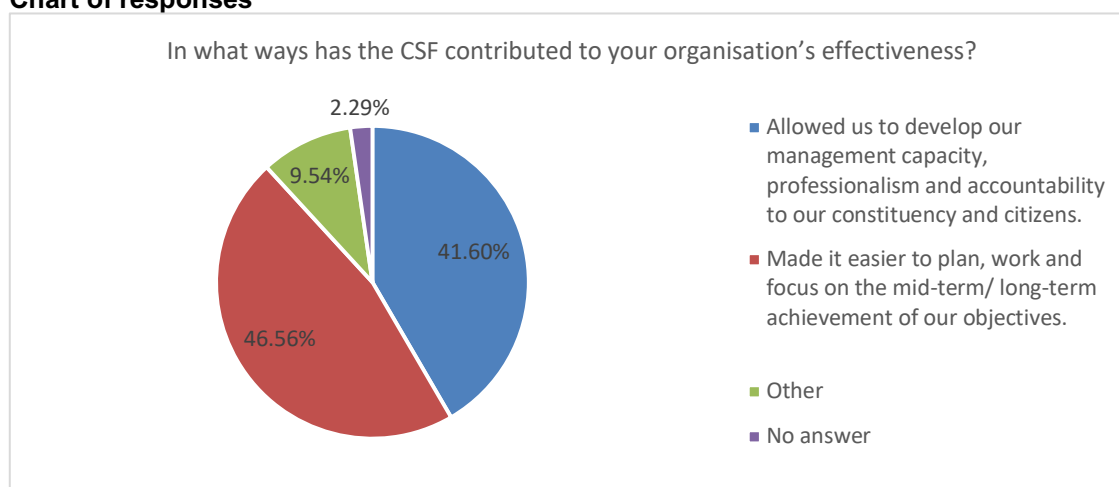
responses. Over 22% view the assistance as significant and at the same time, over 38.5% respond as only somewhat or only to a small extent.

▪ **Question 19**

Count and percentage of responses

In what ways has the CSF contributed to your organisation's effectiveness?		
	Count	Percentage
Allowed us to develop our management capacity, professionalism and accountability to our constituency and citizens.	109	41.60%
Made it easier to plan, work and focus on the mid-term/ long-term achievement of our objectives.	122	46.56%
Other (new knowledge, partnership, it did not contribute)	25	9.54%
No answer	6	2.29%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

Almost equal share of respondents has stated that CSF has contributed to key challenges identified in CSOs capacities within the EU CS Guidelines: 47% stated that it helped them focus on more strategic, longer term orientation of their organizations and 42% on internal management capacities and constituency linkage. Still, there were several organizations (10% under Other) that stated it also contributed to generating new knowledge, partnerships, but also that it has not contribute to their effectiveness (3 cases).

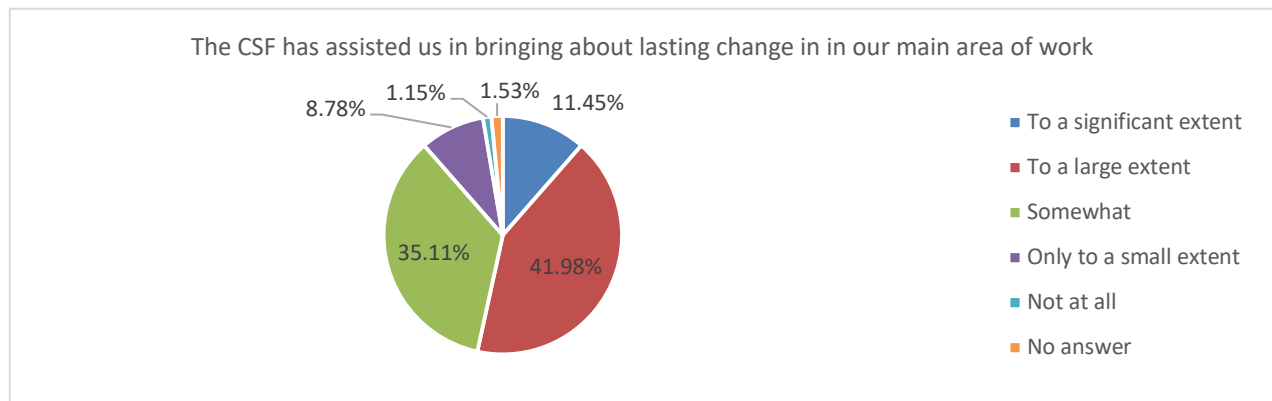
▪ **Impact**

▪ **Question 20**

Count and percentage of responses

The CSF has assisted us in bringing about lasting change in in our main area of work.		
	Count	Percentage
5 – To a significant extent	30	11.45%
4 – To a large extent	110	41.98%
3 – Somewhat	92	35.11%
2 – Only to a small extent	23	8.78%
1 – Not at all	3	1.15%
No answer	4	1.53%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

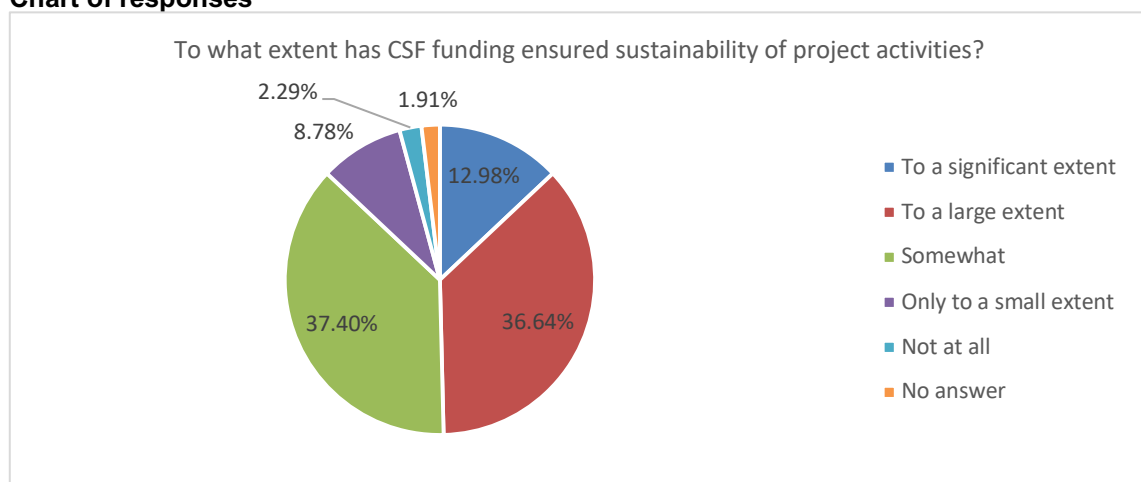
Over 50% of respondents agree that the CSF funding has assisted in bringing about lasting change to a significant or large extent. This very positive response is supported by a 35% that see somewhat of a contribution to lasting change.

- Sustainability
- **Question 21**

Count and percentage of responses

To what extent has CSF funding ensured sustainability of project activities?		
	Count	Percentage
5-To a significant extent	34	12.98%
4-To a large extent	96	36.64%
3-Somewhat	98	37.40%
2-Only to a small extent	23	8.78%
1-Not at all	6	2.29%
No answer	5	1.91%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

While responses to this question are generally positive, and indeed there is a significant percentage (12.98%) that believe the CSF makes a significant contribution to sustainability, there is also a significant percentage of respondents who are only relatively positive (37.4%) and 8.78% who think the contribution is minor. These numbers should be given credence, particularly in light of the very supportive responses to most questions, as they are indicative of where further work is needed.

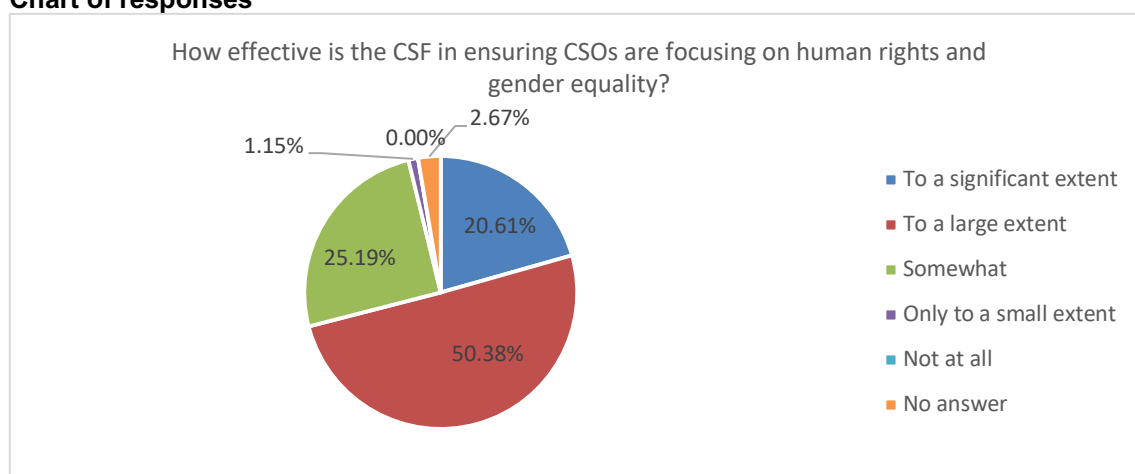
- Cross-cutting Issues

- **Question 22**

Count and percentage of responses

How effective is the CSF in ensuring CSOs are focusing on human rights and gender equality?		
	Count	Percentage
5-To a significant extent	54	20.61%
4-To a large extent	132	50.38%
3-Somewhat	66	25.19%
2-Only to a small extent	3	1.15%
1-Not at all	0	0.00%
No answer	7	2.67%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

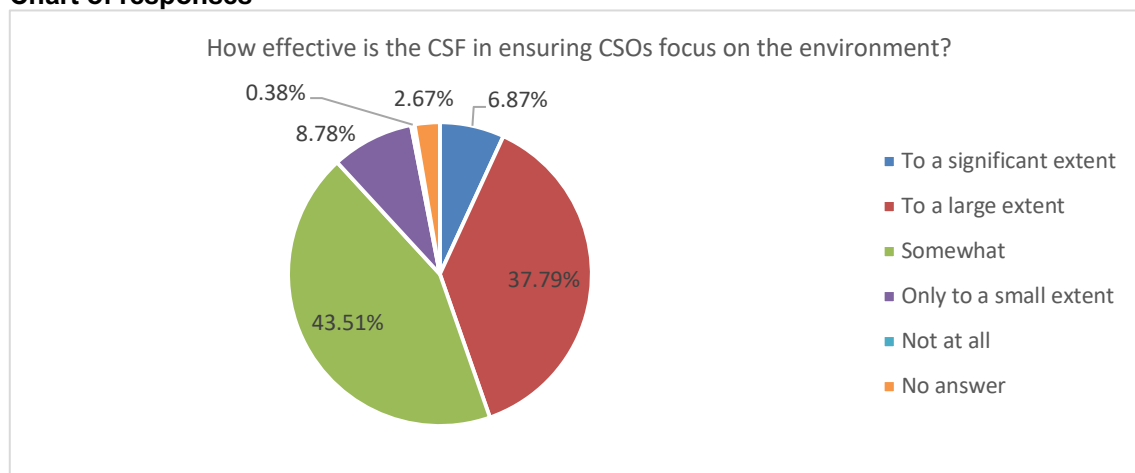
Responses to the effectiveness of the CSF in ensuring a focus on human rights and gender equality are strong.

- **Question 23**

Count and percentage of responses

How effective is the CSF in ensuring CSOs focus on the environment?		
	Count	Percentage
5-To a significant extent	18	6.87%
4-To a large extent	99	37.79%
3-Somewhat	114	43.51%
2-Only to a small extent	23	8.78%
1-Not at all	1	0.38%
No answer	7	2.67%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

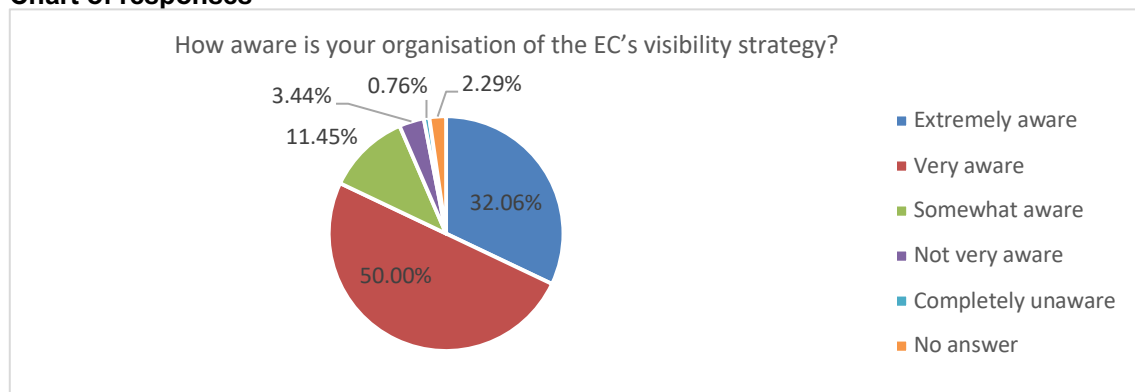
Responses to the effectiveness of the CSF in ensuring a focus on the environment, while strong, are much less supportive than responses to CSF effectiveness in the area of human rights.

▪ **Question 24**

Count and percentage of responses

How aware is your organisation of the EC's visibility strategy?		
	Count	Percentage
Extremely aware (A1)	84	32.06%
Very aware (A2)	131	50.00%
Somewhat aware (A3)	30	11.45%
Not very aware (A4)	9	3.44%
Completely unaware (A5)	2	0.76%
No answer	6	2.29%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

Respondents are clearly very aware of the EC's visibility strategy – fully 32% describe themselves as extremely aware, and a further 50% as very aware.

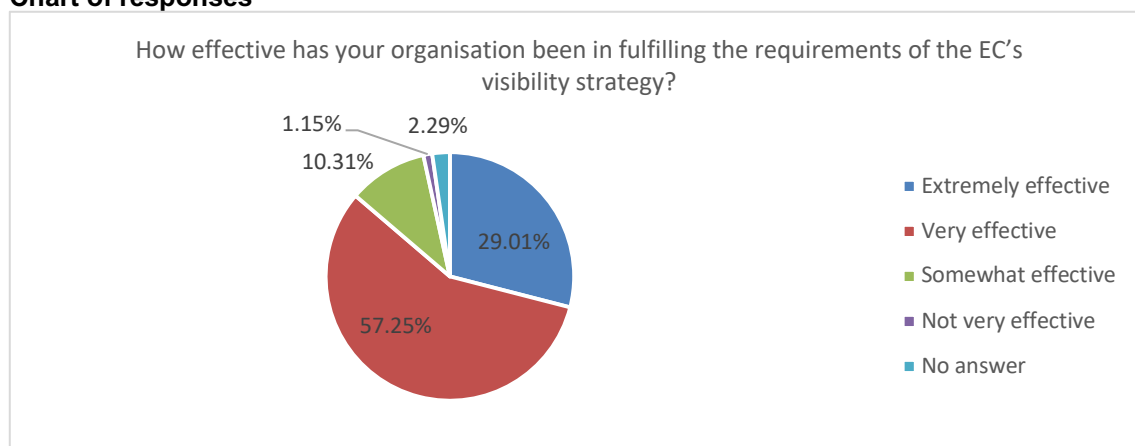
▪ **Visibility**

▪ **Question 25**

Count and percentage of responses

How effective has your organisation been in fulfilling the requirements of the EC's visibility strategy?		
	Count	Percentage
Extremely effective (A1)	76	29.01%
Very effective (A2)	150	57.25%
Somewhat effective (A3)	27	10.31%
Not very effective (A4)	3	1.15%
No answer	6	2.29%

Chart of responses



Analysis of responses

Respondents clearly believe that not only are they aware of the EC's visibility strategy, but also that they are very effective in fulfilling its requirements.

○ **Qualitative Comments, Including Lessons learned and Recommendations**

When asked about **preparing project proposals**, organisations note: administrative issues, their own capacity, a range of matters associated with partnerships, matching the framework of specific calls with their own priorities and activities, arranging for co-financing and competition with other (colleague) CSOs as areas in which they face issues. (Question 1)

In discussing the **management of their projects**, organisations note: complexity of rules (national, EUD, CSF), external factors that cause risk, project coordination and partner commitment, outreach to stakeholders and finances as key areas in which they face issues. (Question 2)

In discussing the ways in which the CSF **contributed to sustainability**, organisations emphasised organisational improvements, and specifically visibility, management capacity, policies, communication skills and approaches, credibility). Beyond this range of organisational improvements, they also note collaboration, financial benefits and a number of long-term gains related to results connections and continuity. (Question 3)

When discussing **factors that hinder sustainability**, organisations point to a range of issues with public institutions, a number of issues with civil society, funding issues and political support (or lack thereof). (Question 4)

When discussing **impact**, organisations comment on organisational improvements, the development and strengthening of civil society, improvements in policy and the political environment, cooperation and outcomes for beneficiaries. (Question 5)

Organisations were specifically asked what **lessons** they had learned that are important for consideration in coming years. Responses fell into 8 major categories: CSO capacity, CSF rules and procedures; CSO behaviour, sub-granting, expectations of public institutions, advocacy and communication and strategic planning, funding modalities and networking. (Question 7)

Recommendations (Question 8) include: recommendations on the programmes reach (sub-granting, application rules, EU engagement), recommendations on application procedures, recommendations on the links between CSF and civil society priorities and objectives, recommendations on strengthening the relationships between civil society and public authorities and recommendations on sustainability of impact.

Respondents also were provided with an opportunity to provide qualitative (narrative) responses to a number of questions. These narrative responses were included within some quantitative questions, as well as the two specific questions on lessons that have been learned and relevant recommendations. To a very large extent, respondents took up the opportunity to provide qualitative responses to these questions. The responses to these questions have been analysed by the evaluation team, with responses summarised below.

▪ **Question 1**

Organisations were asked to define the 3 most common issues they face in preparing and submitting project proposals to the CSF?

The answers below are ordered according to the number of responses for each issue, from largest number of responses to the least number of responses.

Administrative issues

- Sophisticated (terminology).
- Bureaucratic application process.

- Complicated individual forms, such as logical frameworks, especially for small/grassroots organisations.
- Also, limited forms for expressing properly - length of proposals.
- Not enough time.
- Issues with PADOR and PROSPECT reported.
- Challenging rules (in case of projects on media freedom projects - media are forbidden to receive funding).
- Long evaluation period, deadline.
- Limitation to apply to one project only as lead or partner.

Capacities and risks

- Huge investment to prepare.
- English language knowledge.
- Getting all the data.
- Complicated and large number of forms to fill in.
- Not enough capacities.
- Calendar of calls.
- Coordination of a large number of contributions.
- Making a balanced partnership.
- Budget preparation.

Partnership

- Finding partners (especially competent ones and with financial capacity for co-funding).
- Finding common ground when applying with longstanding partners.

Matching the CSF with CSO applicant objectives/ approaches

- CSOs needs vis-à-vis CfP objectives - sometimes they do no match.
- Challenges with presenting activities as activism, rather than advocacy and research.
- Inadequate instruments for funding (eg. For service type of actions having grant modalities).

Co-financing and conditions - threshold for application.

Inclusion of public authorities - ensuring their cooperation.

Flexibility of contracting authority - In terms of negotiations once project approved and in terms of changes in long-term projects needed to adjust to changing environment vis-à-vis the project.

Competition and bias toward developed, professional CSOs based in the capital; breaking up monopolies.

Insufficient time for project implementation; insufficient funding.

Ensuring sustainability.

Unpredictable political situation.

▪ **Question 2**

Organisations were asked to define the 3 most common issues they face in managing their project?

The answers below are ordered according to the number of responses for each issue, from largest number of responses to the least number of responses.

Project administration - burdensome rules and procedures

- Lack of flexibility of rules.
- Complex and too demanding financial & reporting rules.
- Difference in reporting requirements vs. auditors' methodology.
- Demanding procurement procedures.

- Complying with the visibility requirements.
- Long process for validation of the notification of changes to the budget.
- Statement of origin on the technical equipment.
- Lack of simple guidebook.
- Waiting between transfers.
- Lack of capacity for project management.

Contracting Authority Issues

- Communication with the Local Authority on technical issues, (not practical or clear in replies to questions).
- Implementations and rules, different interpretation of the contract by different EU representatives especially of the financial rules.
- Training is not organised in a timely fashion.
- Inability to adapt to changing circumstance (organisational and contextual).
- Weak task managers support.
- Insufficient engagement of EU office representatives.

External challenges

- Mitigating risks, the rapidly changing political and social environment can create a big difference between different partners.
- Lack of flexibility for adapting to newly emerged needs and challenges.
- Difficulty to obtain data.
- Negative perceptions towards CSOs.
- Non-compliance with visibility rules due to the word "Macedonia";
- Volatile political environment towards CSOs.

Project coordination, partner commitment, partner capacities

- Different capacities (lack of capacity) for financial managing.
- Respect for deadlines by all partners.
- Maintaining continuous and quality communication.
- Lack of responsibility by partners.

Cooperation and outreach to stakeholders

- Involving stakeholders and authorities.
- Communication with target groups.
- Finding tools for CSO mobilization.
- Ensuring of support and cooperation of other CSOs.
- Lack of political will and interest of public institutions.
- Dissemination of project results.
- Retrieving the information/feedback from stakeholders.
- Lack of ownership by co-applicants.

Financial aspects

- Ensuring co-financing.
- Covering the cost-share (in the sub-grants).
- Delayed transfer of funds.
- The financial uncertainty jeopardizes the invested work.
- Not accepting in-kind contributions.
- Ensuring compliance by sub-grantees on financial management.
- Financial uncertainty for continued support.

National rules obstacles

- Administrative burden and delays related to waiting for waving of VAT.
- 3rd party grantees unable to get the VAT exemption.
- Challenging VAT procedures for organisations outside capital.
- Different procedures in each country.
- Inadequate law enforcement.
- Delays in the process of project registration.

- In operating grants with partners from different countries, direct payments are impossible (Serbia).

Organisational sustainability and capacity

- Lack of possibility for own organisational development (of management capacity, professionalism and accountability).
- No funds for the organisations apart from personnel.

Monitoring & evaluation challenges

- Difficult to Monitor impact and whether public authorities have used the produced results.
- Auditing is not results and impact oriented, but financially savvy.

▪ **Question 3**

Organisations were asked in which ways CSF funding contributed to the sustainability of their organisation.

The most common response to the question related to **organisational improvements**. A number of types of improvement were noted, including:

- Organisational visibility.
- Management capacity.
- Organisational policies.
- Communication strategies.
- Strengthening of capacities and expertise including improved policy impact.
- Organisational credibility, influence and reputation.
- Improvements in the quality of services provided.
- Improvements in capacities related to fundraising.
- Development of online resources.

Other responses to the question included:

- Benefits from **collaboration** –
 - An extended network of collaborators and partners, either through joining existing networks or establishing new networks.
 - An exchange of know-how and experience.
 - Reaching new donors.
- **Financial** benefits -
 - An improved/ strengthened reputation.
 - A strengthened network and further activity development.
 - Ability to focus on institutional sustainability.
 - Sustainability of human resources. Long-term employment and employing of new people.
- **Long-term** gains –
 - Larger focus on results rather than on fundraising.
 - Re-building of connections with constituencies.
 - Project management capacities.
 - The possibility of long-term activities, such as monitoring, creates opportunities for systematic change.
 - More continuity and consistency, and a better quality of planned actions.
- **Sustainability** –
 - More sustainable actions.
 - Institutional sustainability.
 - Implementation of strategic actions that otherwise would not have been possible.

A number of responses were also directed at areas where CSF funding did not contribute to organisational sustainability. The focus of these responses was a *lack of continuation mechanisms*. Comment was also made as to the inability to commercialise a segment of a granted action as contributing to lack of sustainability.

A number of organisation stated that CSF funding did not contribute at all, or only partly, to organisational sustainability.

▪ **Question 4**

Organisations were asked to define and discuss the factors that hindered the sustainability of the results that they planned in your CSF-funded project(s)?

Responses to this question fell into six major categories:

- Factors relating to **public institutions** –
 - Lack of responsiveness.
 - Lack of understanding/knowledge and support from local authorities for certain actions.
 - Complex administrative structure (BiH).
 - Low capacities regarding EU integration process.
 - Low capacities for service provision despite initial commitment.
 - Lack of inter-institutional collaboration.
 - Lack of state support for CSOs.
- Factors from the **civil society sector** –
 - Politicization of some CSOs (even EU funded) producing non-credible research to serve for countering of evidence-based research finding.
 - CSOs not finding its way to be partner to governments.
 - Disappearing networks when project is ended (knowledge based actions have more sustainable influence).
 - Decline in interest for joining associations.
 - Time consuming fundraising.
 - Low capacities of sub-grantees for management, advocacy and lobbying.
 - Lack of grassroots & crowd-sourcing citizens initiatives.
- Factors related to **funding** –
 - Limited other sources for follow-up activities.
 - Non-transparent state funding.
 - No funds for continuous activities (esp. Important for operation of networks, for monitoring and where vulnerable groups are involved).
 - Lack of funds for sufficient & qualified staff.
 - Lack of systematic support to CSOs.
 - Lack of co-funding and other funding opportunities.
 - Lack of institutional support.
 - Insufficient donor coordination and overlapping.
 - The short-term funding.
- Factors related to **political support and the political environment** –
 - Long lasting political crisis.
 - Lack of political will by governments for CSO involvement in policy making and for cooperation with CSO.
 - Lack of government accountability.
 - State interference in trade unions' framework.
 - Elections (interfere with results or delay impact).
 - Unstable political environment.
 - Frequent change of public officials and public servants.
 - Hindering economic situation for social entrepreneurship and philanthropy.
 - Shrinking of civic space.
 - Unpredictability with the migration crisis.
 - State interference (smear campaign and intimidation towards CSOs in Macedonia, massive projects shutdowns in Turkey).
- Factors related to **project completion** –
 - Lack of motivation by partners to continue activities after project's completion.
 - Hindered cooperation and further development.
- Factors dictated by **CSF rules** and the contracting authority –
 - Imposed partnership for project's requirements.
 - No focus on organisational development of the network.
 - Absence of long term institutional support.

- Too short implementation time (1 year).
- Uncertainty for continuation of the support.
- Lack of coherent approach by the EU on supporting civil society development.
- Lack of political support on issues/areas addressed by EU funded projects.
- Administrative and financial burden.
- Limited possibility for organisational capacity building specific sub-granting rules which a restricting for CFS objectives.
- Complexity (and ambiguity) of call for proposal.
- Lack of political support by EU.

▪ **Question 5**

Organisations were asked what the most important impacts were that had happened as a result of the CSF?

Responses to this question fell into six major categories:

- **Organisational improvement -**
 - Strengthening of expertise & management capacities.
 - Increase of membership & volunteers.
 - Increased visibility and credibility of organisation/network.
 - Establishment/improvement of relation with beneficiaries and institutions.
 - Development/improvement of monitoring & advocacy skills.
 - Possibility to focus on long-term goals.
 - Improvement of organisational procedures.
 - Increased preparedness for structural funds.
 - Strengthening CSO independence and its watchdog role.
 - Strengthened organisational sustainability; possibility for long term and strategic planning.
- **Civil society development and strengthening -**
 - Establishment of network/coalitions.
 - Engaging networking & capacity building of grassroots CSOs & ensuring mid-term sustainability.
 - New consultation platforms and networks.
 - Increased CSO cooperation, strengthening of existing networks, mobilisation of local communities.
 - Exchange of good practices among CSOs.
 - Civil society development; development of partnership.
 - Regional cooperation.
 - Development of grassroots CSOs.
 - Strengthening CSO accountability.
- **Improvement of policy, political/societal environment -**
 - Shift of attitude from authorities: increased public awareness.
 - Mapping of crucial areas.
 - Encouraging action from citizens.
 - Establishment of relevant instruments/databases.
 - Increased inclusion and influence of CSOs on policy-making, legislative improvements: drafting and adoption.
 - Support with implementation.
 - Awareness raising for respect for diversity.
 - EU policy improvement.
 - Improved quality of services of selected local self-government.
 - Increased citizen and CSO participation in decision making on community level.
- **Improved cooperation -**
 - Within the civil society sector (including with grass-root organisations).
 - With authorities and public institutions.
 - With media.
 - With citizens.
 - Between different ethnic groups.
 - Strengthened regional cooperation between CSO and networks.

- Promotion of reconciliation across the region.
- Established/strengthened cooperation with EU networks.
- Information and sharing of best-practices and know-how
- **Improving the position of final beneficiaries -**
 - Capacity building of stakeholders, by strengthening capacities of local social provision CSOs.
 - improved position of final beneficiaries.
- **Relevant outputs (monitoring) & awareness** raising about certain topics -
 - Civil society development.
 - Human trafficking.
 - Environment (as a no-border issue).
 - Children's rights.
 - Youth participation.
 - EU accession reforms.
 - Rule of law.
 - Promoting new forms of assistance to marginalized groups.
 - LGBTIQ rights and needs vis-a-vis trade union's programs.
 - Regional evidence-based research.
 - Better informing citizens about EU membership benefits.
 - Improving data collection.

▪ **Question 6**

Organisations were asked to *rank the ways* in which different CSF modalities (action grants, FPAs, operating grants, funding to third parties and technical assistance) have contributed to achieving CSF aims and objectives.

The ranking was done on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest rank.

Four ways in which the modalities contributed were addressed. Each is looked at below.

- The different CSF modalities made it **easier to cooperate with other CSOs**, networks and building capacities and know-how.

Score	Count	Percentage	Summary
1	5	2.01%	5.62%
2	9	3.61%	
3	37	14.86%	14.86%
4	87	34.94%	79.52%
5	111	44.58%	
Sum	249	100.00%	100.00%

- The different CSF modalities **allowed for piloting and developing new methodologies** for monitoring policies in our thematic area

Score	Count	Percentage	Summary
1	7	2.81%	15.26%
2	31	12.45%	
3	53	21.29%	21.29%
4	87	34.94%	63.45%
5	71	28.51%	
Sum	249	100.00%	100.00%

- The different CSF modalities **enabled better cooperation with country's authorities** (national, local) and exercise greater influence in our thematic policy area.

Score	Count	Percentage	Summary
1	6	2.41%	13.65%
2	28	11.24%	
3	81	32.53%	32.53%
4	77	30.92%	53.82%
5	57	22.89%	
Sum	249	100.00%	100.00%

- The different CSF modalities **allowed for development of thematic networks** and partnerships for long-term, sectorial influence on policies and their implementation.

Score	Count	Percentage	Summary
1	4	1.61%	6.43%
2	12	4.82%	
3	46	18.47%	18.47%
4	99	39.76%	75.10%
5	88	35.34%	
Sum	249	100.00%	100.00%

▪ **Question 7**

Organisations were asked what were the 3 main lessons their organisation had learned that are important for consideration in coming years.

There was a wide variety of response, and as a result, the summaries below also tend to be longer. The responses to this question fell into 8 major categories:

- **CSOs capacities** -
 - Low capacities on service delivery (CSF is focused on policy level not on citizens oriented service).
 - Very important: well-designed communication strategy and plan, monitoring and evaluation, building expertise and in-house capacities, building constituencies and

- strengthening citizen representation, knowledge sharing on how to manage actions through sub-granting.
- CSF is excellent opportunity for gaining knowledge from collaboration with specialized CSOs; monitoring and evaluation skills are very important - the external evaluation is very helpful.
- It is more important to know bureaucratic procedures than having a good idea, trainings for project management might be very helpful for smaller CSOs (on-line modules for ex), lead applicant has to have good management capacities, increase of own transparency and accountability helps in building credibility among constituencies.
- **CSF Rules and procedures -**
 - Application too complex and suitable only for large CSOs, too much focus on procurement procedures and activities rather than on achievement of project goals.
 - CSF relevant mainly for big CSOs, smaller CSOs do not get much for capacity building.
 - The rules are too rigid to respond to the real challenges - bigger flexibility is much needed.
 - The rules of co-funding to be lowered/abandoned in order to engage more csos and to allow for organisational development, visibility is very important, other donors support is much more effective, hard copies are great administrative burden;
 - VAT has to be an eligible cost.
 - Allow in-kind contributions
 - Evaluation process should be integrated during the project.
- **CSO behaviour -**
 - Focus on core issues of public interest.
 - Provide professional expertise.
 - Stay neutral towards political interest.
 - Have clear messaging.
 - Networking and communication with specialized CSOs for capacity building.
 - Multi stakeholders analysis ensures ownership sustainability of results.
 - Cooperation with different actors.
 - Sustainability of project impact depends on strategies for involving decision and policy makers.
 - Plan to secure additional funding.
 - Focus on measurable activities.
 - Multi-stakeholder and multi-level approach, even though complex, is very relevant.
 - A good practice is combining the setup of umbrella organisations with activities of policy development and implementation.
 - Set realistic objectives.
 - Managing big consortia is very demanding (in terms of human resources, time, finances).
 - Direct work with target groups brings better sustainability than activities aimed at policy change.
 - Bigger involvement of partners in application preparation results gives their deeper involvement and ownership.
 - Kick-off conference relevant only in first months of project.
 - Securing other sources of funding for CSF action is crucial (having in mind late payments).
- **Sub-granting** is an important and valuable element -
 - Knowledge sharing on how to manage actions through sub-granting.
 - Better results when CSO capacity building is mixed with sub-granting.
 - Provide training for sub-grantees and grassroots CSOs (sometime even basic training is needed).
 - Coaching on particular aspects and advices on organisational development.
 - Very efficient for increasing impact and visibility.
 - Timing of disbursement should be carefully planned.
 - Sub granting is not very effective in long-term for experienced and medium sized CSOs.
 - Need to better standardise sub-granting (minimum amount to be also set).
 - Exchange of sub-grantees experience should be facilitated
- CSOs should **lower expectations** in regards public institutions, in general they lack understanding on the topic as well as political will and commitment, thus cooperation may be challenging.

- **CSO Advocacy and communication -**
 - Present issues to public in understanding and accessible fashion (for the general public - human interest narratives).
 - Clear messaging and good visibility is very important, also to better promote the role of CS and the role of EU support.
- **For CSF strategic planning -**
 - To provide more incentives for creation of platforms for stakeholders exchange between EU bodies and national beneficiaries.
 - Support CSOs with good thematic knowledge and good track record not replication "advocacy for advocacy".
 - Very important is strengthening organisational capacities and empowerment of CSOs to take an active role in decision-making processes.
 - Activities planned within CSF should be aligned with national/regional EU accession strategies.
 - Bigger inclusion of academia.
 - The regional approach is very important and effective.
 - Support more local CSO to encourage bigger sustainability and impact and include local people - EU based organisation should not coordinate WB project
 - Consultation during programming phase would increase the quality of support.
 - Ensure proper understanding for CSF by all EU to avoid different interpretations due to change of EU staff.
 - CSF should help for more networking on national and regional level.
 - Bigger focus on impact rather than on outputs.
 - Assistance to informal sectoral networks to support its further development, to CSOs dealing with real sector industries, for peacebuilding and reconciliation.
 - Frequent change of priorities by EC hampers sustainability in specific policy areas.
 - Joint regional advocacy relevant only for EU accession and acquis related areas.
 - Projects build on existing initiatives are more successful.
 - The technical assistance provided to CSOs is very helpful.
 - A new approach needed to combine cultural activities with societal developments in order to support human rights and democracy.
 - Project should be at first process oriented than result oriented.
 - Very important is support for evidence-based research and policy recommendations.
 - Further building of advocacy capacities - traditional and online - should be strongly supported.
 - Stronger support for women activists and gender equality.
- **Recommendations on funding modalities -**
 - Increase available funding so to increase CSO sustainability and possibility to focus on content.
 - Funds for M&E should be allocated (also for after the end of project due to longer time need for affecting change).
 - Long-term support is crucial for bigger impact and sustainability of results.
 - Providing core grants is essential for certain areas (environment, social services) and for established networks to continue their operations/work/activity.
 - For quality outputs sufficient funding is needed.
- **Cooperation and networking is essential -**
 - On regional level.
 - On common issues.
 - With government bodies.
 - Regional networks are better than local.
 - Smaller CSOs can increase their impact if part of network.
 - Good for gaining expertise from partners.
 - It helps for identifying needs and problems of CSOs working in the field, long-term results if networking is based on expertise.
 - Smaller and stronger partnerships are more efficient.
 - New partners should be included first as associates than as co-applicants.
 - There is a need for greater synergies with other FPAs.
 - Clear division of tasks between partners for better project efficiency.
 - Detailed partners agreements make project implementation more smooth.

▪ **Question 8**

Organisations were asked what recommendations they had for improvements to the CSF?

Recommendations were requested in 6 different areas, each of which is detailed below.

1. The *reach of the programme* to grassroots and community-based organisations.

- **Sub-granting** is extremely important -
 - Continue with it, increase scope to include medium-size organisations, make sub-granting obligatory for some calls.
 - Simplify rules.
 - Provide capacity building as well as training on procedures and support networking and experience sharing.
 - Standardise sub-granting procedures and make simpler.
 - Provide longer time frame for sub-granting projects and increase sub-granting funds.
 - “From the evaluation feedback from sub-grantees, the grants sizes should be 7-15000 euros for small CSOs, about 2- 5000 euro for citizens initiatives and ad-hoc activities and for the project partners at least 20000 euros each”.
 - Language is a significant challenge in Turkey
- **Amend application rules** -
 - The financial capacity to be assessed cumulatively as whole consortium so that it allows for volunteer and smaller scale organisations to still participate in calls.
 - Make smaller size grants available and simpler application process.
 - Encourage sub-grants and grassroots CSOs to be more involved in project implementation.
 - Ensure better geographical distribution including CSOs from smaller towns.
 - Amend the rules so one organisation can be lead applicant and co-applicant (discouraging smaller organisations to apply even with good project idea).
 - If national CSF, allow for applications in local language.
 - encourage networking with expert organisations.
 - “The CSF should not focus on grassroots but establishing partners in the region who can then work with grassroots.
- **Bigger EU involvement** -
 - EC to engage more and provide assistance for sub granting.
 - Make campaigns to reach different kind of organisations.
 - Exert political pressure towards governments for capacity building of grassroots.
 - “Support development of local participatory based funds/foundations through which smaller grant funding should be delivered for community based organisations and initiatives”.

2. *Procedures for applying*; and for participating in the CSF programme

- **Amend rules and procedure** -
 - Amend procedures so CSO can focus more on content rather than on bureaucracy.
 - Simplify application form and lower criteria.
 - Lower requirements on co-financing (very difficult to obtain).
 - Re-consider cost-share policies.
 - Streamline lump sums, flat rates and simpler financial reporting templates (good examples are the Europe for Citizens of Erasmus + programmes).
 - Allow in-kind contributions.
 - Find more adequate support for media.
 - Provide more operational grants for bigger impact and sustainability.
 - Provide bigger flexibility and possibility for extension.
 - Differentiate calls or lot for small, medium, and big CSOs.
 - Provide combined support to organisations that do advocacy and service provision.
 - Make the application process paperless (numerous responses).
 - Allow same csos to apply to more projects - will stimulate cooperation rather than competition.
 - Guidelines to be published as a word or pdf not as a scan.

- Provide training on procedures.
 - Develop PRAG toolkit.
 - “Please think about using an EMS for project proposals and project managing.”
 - “Procedures for applying cannot be simplified - CSF projects are complex with a reason and solid, administrative capacity is a must.”
 - **Bigger CSO involvement in planning -**
 - More EU info-sessions.
 - Announce call before for more time for preparation.
3. *Links* between civil society objectives and the stated aims and objectives of the CSF programme
- Promoting concrete EU accession gains and values and why it is beneficial for the society (ex. Environment issues).
 - CSF should remain linked to the common objectives - democracy consolidation and future EU accession.
 - Promote understanding that EU accession is transformative agenda.
 - Better communicate CSF goals among general public and to institutions.
 - Bigger coherence between funding instruments and political support.
 - Bigger involvement of CSO in planning of the assistance.
 - Support protection of civic space - support for enabling environment for civil society, regional cooperation and exchange of experiences and best practices.
 - support continuous monitoring of the civil society environment through the EC Guidelines.
 - Enhance cooperation between CSOs and DG (for ex. annual meetings).
 - call for proposals based on real needs identified by csos;
4. *Strengthening outcomes* in the relationships between civil society and government/ public authorities
- Bigger focusing on country specifics.
 - Bigger flexibility of rules and procedure so the project can respond to immediate challenges.
 - Bigger political support of EU (more involvement of DG and EU delegations regarding visibility of project and access to decision and policy makers when there are obstacles met).
 - Invest in strengthening of CSOs in order to be considered partners by governments;
 - Encourage government institutions (and or local self-governments) to be involved in the project (for ex. as associate partner.
 - Encourage state co-funding mechanism (fund) by government.
 - Support monitoring and advocacy projects.
 - Supporting actions (combined with) EU pressure for increasing accountability and transparency of government institutions.
 - Bigger visibility for csos impact.
 - Constant education and awareness raising about the role of CSOs (particularly for the watchdog role).
 - Proven record and good collaboration with state and local governments.
 - Provide training on advocacy.
 - Strengthen CSOs capacities for research and monitoring.
5. *Sustainability/ lasting impact* of the funding support
- Bigger focus on advocacy capacities.
 - Encourage regional cooperation based on issues in common.
 - Trainings for capacity building and expertise; enhance donor coordination.
 - More process oriented approaches and less complicated bureaucratic demands.
 - Because sustainability takes time - best performing networks should be strategically supported.
 - Provide more institutional support.
 - Encourage multidisciplinary approach in application (different sectors).
 - Encourage authorities to take over the support once the project is finished.
 - Enhance advocacy efforts towards decision makers regarding sustainability of social services.
 - Support larger-scale and more long-term projects for greater impact.
 - EU to support/assist with project outreach and media access.

- Create synergies with other CSF projects Including previous ones).
- Provide additional capacity-building support.
- Support “natural”, rather than artificial coalitions.
- For advocacy activities - longer timeframe and bigger budget is required.
- Give preference to WBT CSOs as lead applicants.
- Provide on-time payments.
- Funds should be available for local organisations not for international organisations and agencies.
- “Sustainability needs to be developed in relation to the Theory of Change”.

6. Other

- Encourage communication of CSOs with mass-media.
- Better communication of the EU institutions.
- Increased utilization of local intermediaries in action implementation for wider outreach.
- Try to avoid excluding organisations established outside the country where the project is implemented.
- (Further) support is needed for: peacebuilding and reconciliation, economic rights, environment, public health, safety and health at work, culture as a tool for social change, child rights, women empowerment, human rights protection and anti-corruption activities.
- Keep the programme open for new areas: e.g. education support; transmission of good practices to candidate countries).
- For reconciliation projects it would be good to have activities in Croatia and Slovenia.
- Stronger support to local CSOs.
- in case of similar applications - bring people together and recommend joint application.
- ”Support for the establishment of centres for support of social enterprises.”
- “To restrict large foundations that do significant re-granting (e.g. over 300.000 or 500.000 EUR annual re-granting in the case of Macedonia) from participating in the CSF (or create special calls for them) - it was noticed that their application is based on the use of significant segments of the project proposals they have received from applicants to their grant programmes. Also, unlike for other small and medium CSOs, CSF is not key source to their funding.”

■ Annex 1 – Survey Questionnaire

Introduction

This survey is part of the Mid-term Evaluation of the Civil Society Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey being undertaken for DG NEAR.

The *primary objective* of the evaluation is to ‘assess the performance of financial assistance in achieving its objectives, and namely, its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, EU added value, coherence, complementarity and consistency as well as impact and sustainability’.

The *specific objectives* of the evaluation are:

- To assess the performance of the assistance both at regional and national level, particularly as regards its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, EU added value, coherence, complementarity and consistency, impact and sustainability. The assessment of each evaluation criteria should measure achievements against indicators set up in strategic and programming documents.
- To provide an assessment of the intervention logic of EU assistance to support civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey in light of the CSOs needs in the region and the priorities set by DG NEAR in its policy and strategy documents. The evaluators will assess to which extent programming documents are based on a balanced and comprehensive planning of the support to civil society.

This survey is addressed to all beneficiaries of projects supported through the CSF during the period 2011-2016.

As well as this survey, a selection of projects that received CSF funding support will be analysed in-depth to obtain more detail and concrete insights on lessons learned and best practice, in order to provide input for future civil society support assistance to the EC.

Any information provided in this survey is confidential.

Organisation type. Subject to answers to this question, the respondent is taken to a different Part 1.

Our organisation is:

- A CSO in the Western Balkans or Turkey.
- An International Governmental Organization (IGO).
- A consultancy firm/ company.

Part 1 - Organisation Detail – CSOs in the Western Balkans and Turkey

Our organisation is located in:

- Albania
- BiH
- Croatia
- FYRoM/ Macedonia
- Kosovo
- Montenegro
- Serbia
- Turkey
- EU Member State
- Other (Explain)

We are the following type of organisation:

- Association
- Foundation
- Network
- Representation office of a foreign organisation
- Other (Explain)

Our organisation was established (i.e. became active):

- Prior to or in 2000
- 2001 - 2005
- 2006 – 2010
- 2011 - 2016

Our organisation was registered:

- We are not registered (act as an informal initiative/organisation)
- Prior to or in 2000
- 2001 - 2005
- 2006 – 2010
- 2011 - 2016

Our organisation employs:

- 0 staff
- 1 - 5 staff
- 6 - 10 staff
- 11 - 15 staff
- 16 - 20 staff
- More than 20 staff

Our organisation engages:

- 0 volunteers
- 1 - 5 volunteers
- 6 - 10 volunteers
- 11 - 15 volunteers
- 16 - 20 volunteers
- More than 20 volunteers

Our organisation's annual budget (on average over the past 3 years (2014-2016)) was:

- 0 - 5,000 Euros
- 5,001 – 10,000 Euros
- 10,001 – 50,000 Euros
- 50,001 – 100,000 Euros
- 101,000 - 500,000 Euros
- 500,000 – 1 million Euros
- Over 1 million Euros

Currently, our main financing sources come from (mark 3, in order of importance):

European Union (IPA, EIDHR, other)
UN and other multilateral donors
European bilateral donors (incl. SIDA, SDC, MATRA, ADC)
USAID
Foreign private funding (OSF, Mott, RBF, Oak Foundation etc.)
Domestic public funding (Ministries, agencies, municipalities)
Domestic private funding (Corporate Social Responsibility - CSR, philanthropy)
Membership fee
We do not have financing sources

How would you define yourself in terms of approach of work:

- We are predominantly a watchdog organisation.
- We are predominantly a service providing organisation.
- Both
- Other (explain)

How many CSF projects have you implemented to date, as lead applicant?

- 0

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- More than 4

How many CSF projects have you implemented to date as a partner/ co-applicant?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- More than 4

I have had other roles/explain: _____

Our organisation received total funding from the CSF, for our most recent project, in the amount of:

- Up to 50,000 Euros
- 50,001 Euros to 100,000 Euros
- 100,001 Euros to 250,000 Euros
- 250,001 Euros to 500,000 Euros
- 500,001 Euros to 1 million Euros
- Over 1 million Euros

Funding was provided to our organisation for (including the length of any approved extension):

- less than 12 months
- 13 to 18 months
- 19 to 24 months
- 25 to 36 months
- 37 to 48 months
- More than 48 months

Our organisation first received funding for our project from the CSF in:

- 2012
- 2013
- 2014
- 2015
- 2016

Our project is:

- On-going (still running after 1st January, 2017)
- Completed (closed on/ before 31st December, 2016)

The CSF funding (for our most recent project) was provided:

Just for our organisation

For our organisation and other organisations in my country

For our organisation and partner(s) in EU Member State(s)

For our organisation and other organisations in **some** other countries of the Western Balkans and/or Turkey

For our organisation and at least one organisation in **all** countries of the Western Balkans as well as Turkey

The project funded by the CSF with our organisation was:

- A (short, medium or long-term) action grant
- A Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA)
- An operating grant
- For financial contributions to 3rd parties
- For Technical Assistance
- Other – Please provide details

The CSF funding was provided to our organisation for work in:

- Civil society development and local democracy
- Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth
- Good governance, public administration reform (PAR) and public financial management, rule of law and the fight against corruption
- Media and freedom of expression
- Reconciliation and cultural dialogue
- Environment, climate action, energy and agriculture
- Other – Please provide details: _____

Part 1 - Organisation Detail – International NGOs

Our organisation is located in <fill in the correct information>.

We have, as lead applicant, implemented the following number of CSF projects to date.

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- More than 4

We have, as partner/ co-applicant, implemented the following number of CSF projects to date.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- More than 4
- I have had other roles/explain: _____

Our organisation received total funding from the CSF, for our most recent project, in the amount of:

- Up to 50,000 Euros
- 50,001 Euros to 100,000 Euros
- 100,001 Euros to 250,000 Euros
- 250,001 Euros to 500,000 Euros
- 500,001 Euros to 1 million Euros
- Over 1 million Euros

Funding was provided to our organisation for (including the length of any approved extension):

- less than 12 months
- 13 to 18 months
- 19 to 24 months
- 25 to 36 months
- 37 to 48 months
- More than 48 months

Our organisation first received funding for our project from the CSF in:

- 2012
- 2013
- 2014
- 2015
- 2016

Our project is:

- On-going (still running after 1st January, 2017)
- Completed (closed on/ before 31st December, 2016)

The CSF funding (for our most recent project) was provided:

- Just for our organisation

- For our organisation and other organisations in **some** other countries of the Western Balkans and/or Turkey
- For our organisation and at least one organisation in **all** countries of the Western Balkans as well as Turkey

The project funded by the CSF with our organisation was:

- A (short, medium or long-term) action grant
- A Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA)
- An operating grant
- For financial contributions to 3rd parties
- For Technical Assistance
- Other – Please provide details

The CSF funding was provided to our organisation for work in:

- Civil society development and local democracy
- Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth
- Good governance, public administration reform (PAR) and public financial management, rule of law and the fight against corruption
- Media and freedom of expression
- Reconciliation and cultural dialogue
- Environment, climate action, energy and agriculture
- Other – Please provide details: _____

Part 1 - Organisation Detail – Consultancy Firms/ Companies

Our organisation is located in <fill in the correct information>.

We have, as lead applicant, implemented the following number of CSF projects to date.

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- More than 4

We have, as partner/ co-applicant, implemented the following number of CSF projects to date.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- More than 4
- I have had other roles/explain: _____

Our organisation received total funding from the CSF, for our most recent project, in the amount of:

- Up to 50,000 Euros
- 50,001 Euros to 100,000 Euros
- 100,001 Euros to 250,000 Euros
- 250,001 Euros to 500,000 Euros
- 500,001 Euros to 1 million Euros
- Over 1 million Euros

Funding was provided to our organisation for (including the length of any approved extension):

- less than 12 months
- 13 to 18 months
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- 25 to 36 months
- 37 to 48 months
- More than 48 months

Our organisation first received funding for our project from the CSF in:

- 2012
- 2013
- 2014
- 2015
- 2016

Our project is:

- On-going (still running after 1st January, 2017)
- Completed (closed on/ before 31st December, 2016)

The CSF funding (for our most recent project) was provided:

- Just for our organisation
- For our organisation and other organisations in **some** other countries of the Western Balkans and/or Turkey
- For our organisation and at least one organisation in **all** countries of the Western Balkans as well as Turkey

The project funded by the CSF with our organisation was:

- A (short, medium or long-term) action grant
- A Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA)
- An operating grant
- For financial contributions to 3rd parties
- For Technical Assistance
- Other – Please provide details

The CSF funding was provided to our organisation for work in:

- Civil society development and local democracy
- Social inclusion, antidiscrimination, gender and the fight against poverty, youth
- Good governance, public administration reform (PAR) and public financial management, rule of law and the fight against corruption
- Media and freedom of expression
- Reconciliation and cultural dialogue
- Environment, climate action, energy and agriculture
- Other – Please provide details: _____

Part 2 - Feedback on the CSF

Relevance

How familiar are you with the *overall* objectives of the CSF?

- 5 – Extremely familiar
- 4 – Very familiar
- 3 – Somewhat familiar
- 2 - Not particularly familiar
- 1 - Completely unfamiliar

How familiar are you with the specific objectives of the CSF in *your country*?

- 5 – Extremely familiar
- 4 – Very familiar
- 3 – Somewhat familiar
- 2 - Not particularly familiar
- 1 - Completely unfamiliar

How relevant is the CSF to the development of Enlargement countries?

- 5 – Extremely relevant
- 4 – Very relevant
- 3 – Somewhat relevant

- 2 - Not particularly relevant
- 1 - Completely irrelevant

How relevant is the CSF to your country's priorities in becoming an EU Member State?

- 5 – Extremely relevant
- 4 – Very relevant
- 3 – Somewhat relevant
- 2 - Not particularly relevant
- 1 - Completely irrelevant

How relevant is the CSF to general development of civil society?

- 5 – Extremely relevant
- 4 – Very relevant
- 3 - Somewhat relevant
- 2 - Not very relevant
- 1 - Completely irrelevant

How relevant is the CSF to your organisation and its activities?

- 5 – Extremely relevant
- 4 – Very relevant
- 3 - Somewhat relevant
- 2 - Not very relevant
- 1 - Completely irrelevant

Based on the experience of your organisation, the EU communicates and coordinates CSF with other key donors in your country:

- 5- Extremely well
- 4 – Very well
- 3 - Somewhat well
- 2 - Not particularly well
- 1 - Poorly

Efficiency

Is the CSF programme reaching grassroots/community-based organisations?

- 5 – Extremely good reach
- 4 – Very good reach
- 3 – Reasonably good reach
- 2 - Not very good reach
- 1 – Poor reach

How flexible is the Contracting Authority (DG NEAR, EUD) in its meeting changing needs of your organization in managing your (latest) CSF project?

- 5 – Extremely flexible
- 4 – Very flexible
- 3 - Somewhat flexible
- 2 - Not very flexible
- 1 - Completely inflexible

How responsive has the Contracting Authority (DG NEAR, EUD) been in its management of your (latest) CSF project?

- 5 – Extremely responsive
- 4 – Very responsive
- 3 - Somewhat responsive
- 2 - Not very responsive
- 1 - Completely irresponsive

What are the 3 most common issues you faced in *preparing and submitting* your most recent project proposal for the CSF? (Open question)

What are the 3 most common issues you face in *managing* your most recent project under the CSF?
(Open question)

How would you describe your relationship with DG NEAR (Civil Society Unit/ D5)?

6 - We regularly send them information about our activities and suggestions on support to civil society in our sector.

5- We regularly attend meetings, consultations, etc. when invited.

4 - We receive information from them and communicate with them in writing only.

3 - We receive information from them, but seldom communicate or respond.

2 - We receive little information or communication from the DG.

1 - We have no interaction with the DG.

How would you describe your relationship with your EU Delegation (EUOK in Kosovo)?

6 - We regularly send them information about our activities and suggestions on support to civil society in our sector.

5 - We regularly attend meetings, consultations, etc. when invited.

4 - We receive information from them and communicate with them in writing only.

3 - We receive information from them, but seldom communicate or respond.

2 - We receive little information or communication from the EUD.

1 - We have no interaction with the EUD.

Effectiveness

How effective has the CSF programme been in achieving its stated aims and objectives?

5 - Extremely effective

4 - Very effective

3 - Somewhat effective

2 - Not very effective

1 - Completely ineffective

How closely aligned are the aims and objectives of the CSF with the priorities of your organisation?

5 - Extremely well aligned

4 - Very closely aligned

3 - Somewhat aligned

2 - Not very aligned

1 - Not at all aligned

What is the most significant contribution of the CSF to the development of Western Balkans and Turkish CSOs? (Mark up to 3)

5 - The programme's focus on both regional and national issues of interest to CSOs.

4 - The programme's mix of instruments allowing for support for networking and sub-granting.

3 - The programme's support for exchange and learning from CSOs in other countries, including from EU Member States.

2 - The programme's focus on supporting advocacy and monitoring activities

1 - The programme's support towards creating enabling conditions for CSO development and operation.

0 - Other. Explain: _____

How important is the networking of your organisation with other organisations in your sector (both in your country and other IPA/ EU Member States)?

5 - Very important

4 - Somewhat important

3 - Neither important nor unimportant

2 - Of little importance

1 - Not important at all

In what ways have the CSF modalities (action grants, FPAs, operating grants, funding to third parties and technical assistance) contributed to CSF aims and objectives? (Open question)- select as many as appropriate with ranking from 5-1, with 5 being most important and 1 least important

- Have made it easier to cooperate with other CSOs, networks and building capacities and know-how
- Have allowed for piloting and developing new methodologies for monitoring policies in our thematic area
- Have enabled better cooperation with country's authorities (national, local) and exercise greater influence in our thematic policy area
- Have allowed for development of thematic networks and partnerships for long-term, sectorial influence on policies and their implementation
- Other. Please, specify

The CSF has assisted my organisation in the development/ building of our organisational capacity.

- 5 – To a significant extent
- 4 – To a large extent
- 3 – Somewhat
- 2 – Only to a small extent
- 1 – Not at all

In what ways have the CSF modalities (action grants, FPAs, operating grants, funding to third parties and technical assistance) contributed to your organisation's effectiveness in addressing your objectives? (Open question)

- Have allowed us to develop our management capacity, professionalism and accountability to the constituency and citizens
- Have made it easier to plan, work and focus on mid-/long-term achievements of our organizational objectives
- Other. Please, specify

Impact

The CSF programme has brought about lasting change in in our main area of work: [drop down menu of thematic areas]:

- 5 – To a significant extent
- 4 – To a large extent
- 3 – Somewhat
- 2 – Only to a small extent
- 1 – Not at all

Please describe up to three of the most important impacts that have happened as a result of the CSF. (Open Question).

To what extent are regional networks funded through the CSF advocating effectively for policy reforms nationally and across the region?

- 5 – To a significant extent
- 4 – To a large extent
- 3 – Somewhat
- 2 – Only to a small extent
- 1 – Not at all

Sustainability

To what extent has CSF funding ensured sustainability of project activities?

- 5 – To a significant extent
- 4 – To a large extent
- 3 – Somewhat
- 2 – Only to a small extent
- 1 – Not at all

Please provide up to three ways in which CSF funding support has contributed to the *sustainability of your organisation*? Open question

Please provide up to three factors that have hindered sustainability of the planned results *within your CSF-funded project(s)*? Open question.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Gender and Human Rights

How effective is the CSF in ensuring CSOs are giving effective focus to human rights and gender equality?

- 5 – To a significant extent
- 4 – To a large extent
- 3 – Somewhat
- 2 – Only to a small extent
- 1 – Not at all

Environment

How effective is the CSF in ensuring CSOs are giving effective focus to the environment?

- 5 – To a significant extent
- 4 – To a large extent
- 3 – Somewhat
- 2 – Only to a small extent
- 1 – Not at all

Visibility

How aware is your organisation of the EC's visibility strategy?

- 5 – Extremely aware
- 4 – Very aware
- 3 - Somewhat aware
- 2 - Not very aware
- 1 - Completely unaware

How effective has your organisation been in fulfilling the requirements of the EC's visibility strategy?

- 5 – Extremely effective
- 4 – Very effective
- 3 - Somewhat effective
- 2 - Not very effective
- 1 - Completely ineffective

Part 3 - Lessons Learned And Recommendations

What are the 3 main lessons your organisation has learned about the CSF funding that you think are important to be considered in the coming years? Open Question.

What recommendations do you have for improvements to the CSF? Please give specific consideration to:

- The reach of the programme to grassroots and community-based organisations.
- Procedures for applying, and for participating in the CSF programme.
- Links between civil society objectives and the stated aims and objectives of the CSF programme.
- Strengthening outcomes in the relationships between civil society and government/ public authorities.
- Sustainability/lasting impact of the funding support.
- Other. Please, specify



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